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GIFTED, BILINGUAL, MEXICAN/MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS: USING COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH AS A STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATING PARADOXES

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GIFTED, BILINGUAL, MEXICAN/MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS: USING COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH AS A STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATING PARADOXES

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2013

Dedication

This dissertation study is dedicated to the Rodríguez family:

To my former students, Alexis and Raúl, who weathered the transition from microagressions to affirmation with their love of learning intact, and

To their mother, Mrs. María Rodríguez, whose undaunted insistence on her children's right to a linguistically and academically appropriate education started a revolution.

Acknowledgements

One of the challenges of doing a dissertation at this stage in my life and career is the sheer number of people I should remember to thank for their help and inspiration! I'm almost sure to leave some folks out, but here goes.

To my family: To my love, my husband, Bill, who has heard every thought and suffered every setback with me, encouraged me when I wanted to quit and problem-solved me through it, and never doubted me even when I doubted myself, thank you for bearing with me through it all; to my children, Karl, Andrea, Daniel, and Gabriel, who inspire me to keep learning. Dan and Gabe, you were still at home when I went back to school! I love you all and I am so proud of the young adults you have become. To my parents, my first teachers, and especially you, Daddy, who told me you always wanted to get your PhD but chose instead to keep working to support us. Those words kept me focused when I didn't think I could finish. This one is for you.

To my committee members, thank you, first, for helping me see that while yes, everything is really connected, it doesn't all have to go in one dissertation study! Your guidance pushed me to learn and grow through this process. In particular, my chair, Dr. María Fránquiz, whom I met years ago as a Masters student at UTSA and who told me then I had a dissertation in me; Dr. Patricia Alvarez McHatton, who gave countless hours

of feedback, consejos, and support; and Dr. Cinthia Salinas, who took me under her wing when I first came to UT. Mil gracias.

I want to thank all those past teachers from preschool to graduate school who taught me the value of "lifting as we climb" by their example. Dr. Robert Bayley, Dr. Josie Mendez-Negrete, and Dr. Stan Seidner, who first told me I was PhD material (even as I insisted I only wanted a masters!); Dr. Robert Milk, who together with the faculty in the Department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio made it possible for me to pursue a doctorate by taking a chance on an evening PhD program; and Dr. Howard Smith, who made good on his promise that I could always call UTSA home.

Thank you to my colleagues in the Westcreek Independent School District from whom I've learned so much: A special shout out to my two bosses for their support of me and our kids, and to the late Dr. Phil Linerode for your counsel. I miss getting my geek on with you over in Testing and Evaluation. To Elaine Asbell, the GT Specialist at Chase, for your invaluable assistance in opening your classroom and helping me find participants. I hope your students know they could not have a more perfect guide and advocate than one who had to fight discouragement to find her own way to college.

Special gracias to all my former students who taught me as much as I taught them. I could feel you breathing over my shoulder, smiling, correcting, and even frowning, but always challenging me to rethink things through your eyes.

To the students at Chase High School, especially Adriana, Christian, Derrick, Edwin, Joaquín, Marifer , Mía, Natalie, and Naya, who shared their lives with me, and to

their families, who welcomed me into their children's lives and, in some cases, their homes, les agradezco con todo mi corazón. Mil bendiciones.

To Dr. Norma Alarcón for reading my cartas at that Halloween party (it helped!).

To my fellow PhD students, especially Cohort 6 (remember our first class – Statistics?) and the amazing Amigas Writing group! Twice a week for the past year you have been my stronghold on sanity. Adriana, Jimena, Lisa, Sonia – amigas, hermanas, colegas, ¡Suerte! As you move toward this same stage in your own work, I'm there for you like you were there for me, cheering, chicas! What can I say – dime con quién andas y te dire quién eres. Thank you for letting me walk among you. Your comadrazgo is priceless.

One thing I learned about myself as a doc student is that I often have to verbalize my thoughts to think them through. Thank you to all my friends, colleagues, and the random people who suffered listening to me as I talked myself through my findings – especially those of you who pretended you hadn't heard it before – but also to those who gave me feedback.

Thank you, also, to everyone who told me I couldn't or shouldn't be in grad school. You gave me the ganas to prove you wrong.

Yes, this acknowledgement section is long, but I'm old. Anyway, if you accomplish anything in life without having a lot of people to thank along the way you're either ungrateful or you're doing it wrong. In either case, you missed the biggest lesson – none of us do anything that matters without collective action. Peace.

GIFTED, BILINGUAL, MEXICAN/MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS: USING COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH AS A STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATING PARADOXES

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

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This qualitative dissertation study examined the ways that nine gifted, bilingual Mexican/Mexican-American students negotiated paradoxes in their academic, linguistic, and cultural identities in a public high school in a large, south central Texas city. One theoretical lens, Critical Race Theory/Latino Critical Race Theory (CRT/LatCrit) was combined with phenomenological research methods to privilege the students' perspectives during the data collection process. An additional theoretical lens, the concept of Figured Worlds, was used to contextualize the setting, Chase High School. Both CRT/LatCrit and Figured Worlds were used to analyze interview, classroom and field observation, participant, school, and district artifacts, federal, state and local data collected over ten months of study. The investigation revealed that the participants braided the domains of community cultural wealth – aspirational, navigational, linguistic, social, resistance, and familial capital – into practices that grounded them in their bilingual, bicultural Mexican/Mexican-American identities as successful students.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Gifted education programs have been criticized as enclaves within public schools that provide differential courses of study to the children of privilege (Sapon-Shevin, 1994; Staiger, 2004). This criticism is certainly well-founded and justifiable given the disproportionate enrollment of white, middle and upper-class children in gifted education programs and the concomitant over-enrollment of low-income children and children of color, particularly African-American and Latina/o[1] children, in special education programs (Artiles, 2002; Connor & Boskin, 2001; Donovan & Cross, 2002; J. J. I. Harris, Brown, Ford, & Richardson, 2004; O'Connor & Fernández, 2006; Zehler, Hopstock, Fleischman, & Greniuk, 1994).

Proponents of gifted education suggest it should be conceived as a program service designed to meet students' particular needs (Brown et al., 2005; Burney, 2008; B. Clark, 1997; Robinson, Shore, & Enersen, 2007), analogous to special education services (DeRonda, 2010)[2]. Despite this perspective, students of color, and, in particular, Latina/o students, continue to be persistently underrepresented in programs serving gifted learners (Baldwin, 2004; Bernal, 2002a; Brice & Brice, 2004; Castellano, 2004; Milner & Ford, 2007; Smutny, 2003). Once identified, Latina/o gifted students still may experience difficulty accessing appropriate program services. Plaintiffs in an ongoing lawsuit charge that the Latina/o gifted students were segregated from White gifted students even though there was no need to offer program services in Spanish

[1] The term "Latina/o" will be used throughout this dissertation in general reference to the cultural and linguistic groups that comprise indigenous and immigrant populations from the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas and their descendants (i.e. Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, etc.) except when direct citation indicates otherwise. My use of the a/o seeks to be inclusive of both males and females and to challenge the embedded privilege linguistically granted to the masculine form, as in Spanish the masculine form is generally used to refer to a group of mixed gender or when gender is not specified. Specific national-origin references will be used when appropriate, and the ethnic/cultural/national identities that participants claim for themselves will be honored. As such, the term "Hispanic" will be used only either in the latter context or in direct citation.

[2] Indeed, in New Mexico, gifted students are identified as exceptional learners and have been served through special education since 1972 (New Mexico State Department of Education Special Education Office, 2008).

(McFarlan, 2012; Unmuth, 2012). Latina/o gifted students are likely to encounter programs ill-matched to their needs in other ways (Castellano, 2003; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Ford, 2005b; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Granada, 2002). – programs that, Bernal observes (2002a) "would try to change or reconfigure minority GT students to resemble White GT students" (Bernal, 2002a, p. vii). The ethnocentric perspectives of mainstream educators are betrayed even when they purport to be inclusive: the title of a recent article in the journal of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented characterizes culturally diverse gifted students as "diamonds in the rough" (Casmer, 2010a). The implication is that what these gifted students learn in their homes and communities does not prepare them adequately for school and will not serve them well in gifted education programs. Schools, then, are conceived in this dissertation as figured worlds, because, according to Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, a figured world is a "socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 52). Figured worlds are dialogically constructed through social contact and mutual practice (Holland, et al., 1998). These practices often serve to manage power and privilege by conferring degrees of status on particular individuals (for example, English speakers in schools in South Texas) within them. In the figured world of many public schools, gifted students are constructed as academically successful, while English Language Learners (ELLs)[3] and students of color are constructed in deficit and in need of remediation.

[3] Because this dissertation study investigates biliterate language practices, English Language Learner (ELL) will be the preferred term used. It reflects an additive approach to language learning, in contrast to Limited English Proficient (LEP) student, which characterizes the student's emerging acquisition of English as a condition of deficit (Valencia, 1997). The term "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) student, will be used only where it appears in titles or in direct quotations.

How do Latina/o students – who against the odds are identified as gifted – negotiate such conflicts between their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities? Based on personal and group interviews, personal artifacts, classroom observations, school, district, and state level artifacts and other data sources, this qualitative study (Creswell, 2003; Crotty, 2003), seeks to answer this question through an examination of the experiences of nine gifted-identified Latina/o high school students.

BACKGROUND

Problem Statement

Latina/o students historically have been underrepresented in programs designed for the gifted and talented (Baldwin, 2004; Bernal, 2002b; Castellano & Díaz, 2002; Ford & Whiting, 2006). Despite decades of attention, this underrepresentation continues to the present day: Ford (2010) reports that Latina/o students nationally are 38% less likely than White students to be identified as gifted; Casmer (2010a) reports a 12 percentage point difference between Texas Latina/o student enrollment in kindergarten to eight grade and their representation among the identified gifted. As a result, much of the existing work on gifted and potentially gifted Latina/o students centers on strategies for their identification (Castellano, 2004; Esquierdo, Irby, & Lara-Alecio, 2008; A. Fernández, Gay, Lucky, & Gavilán, 1998; V. González, Baurle, & Clark, 1996; Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Walker, 1997; Masten & Plata, 2000; Pierce et al., 2007; Vanderslice, 1998). Although some recent studies (Alvarez McHatton, Shaunessy, Hughes, Brice, & Ratliff, 2007; Shaunessy & Alvarez McHatton, 2008; Shaunessy, Alvarez McHatton, Hughes, Brice, & Ratliff, 2007; Worrell, 2007) have investigated the lived experiences of gifted Latina/Latino students, we are often left wondering, as did Fernández (2002), what is left out of analyses that do not include student voices.

Few prior investigations have examined in-depth the intersections of giftedness, culture, language, and identity, particularly in light of those traits researchers have identified as characteristic of gifted students in general and gifted Latina/o students in particular. Passow and Frasier (1996) point out, "As with all individual traits, the aptitudes, attitudes, and characteristics that are associated with talent potential are culturally imbedded, that is, they may be manifested differently within different cultural contexts" (Passow & Frasier, 1996, p. 201). For example, many researchers (e.g. Fletcher & Massalski, 2003; Lovecky, 1997; Silverman, 1994, 2003) have observed gifted students' strong sense of justice and fairness (Davis & Rimm, 2004). Texas bilingual teachers participating in Irby and Lara-Alecio's 1996 study also noted that bilingual gifted Latina/o students displayed a keen sense of justice and quick "ability to perceive injustice" (Irby & Lara-Alecio, 1996, p. 132). They likened this trait to that of the mainstream gifted-identified students described by Renzulli, Hartman, and Callahan in validating their "Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students" (1971, as cited in Irby & Lara-Alecio, 1996).

This sense of injustice may manifest itself through a particular sensitivity to racial and cultural issues (New Mexico State Department of Education Special Education Office, 2000). Ford (2006) notes that a gifted culturally diverse student's keen sense of justice may lead her or him to notice and not hesitate to point out inconsistencies, and to confront injustice with anger. She characterizes this child as one who is "passionate in his/her disdain for unfairness" (p. 3).

Researchers of Latina/o gifted students have found that these students characteristically display pride in their culture and language (Aguirre & Hernández, 2002; Granada, 2003; Irby & Lara-Alecio, 1996). Some studies have looked at code-switching as an early indicator of linguistic giftedness (Shaunessy, et al., 2007). However, Worrell (2007) found that high-ability

Latina/o students' scores on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure predicted that these students would score higher on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale than they did. Although self-esteem has been correlated with academic achievement, he failed to find a similar link between ethnic identity and high achievement.

The present study helps us to understand the experiences of gifted Latina/o students in their own words. Prior investigations of gifted education have been conducted using traditional research paradigms. This study, by contrast, will employ a Critical Race Theory/LatCrit theoretical framework. Such a perspective allows us to achieve a uniquely nuanced view of gifted education programs as sites of both reproduction of and contestation to hegemony as experienced in school socialization to language and literacy.

At the most fundamental level, one's ethnocultural identification with a particular group has consequences for language maintenance/shift as well as literacy (Ferdman, 1990, as cited in Jiménez, 2000; The New London Group, 1996). Jiménez, in his 2000 study, concluded with regard to his focal students that "identity, with subsequent implications for literacy development, were connected to their status as bicultural, bilingual, biliterate persons" (p. 985).

In the figured world (Holland, et al., 1998) of school, "gifted" and "biliterate/bilingual/bicultural" identities are constructed dialogically when students exercise their agency in the face of school practices (Bartlett & Holland, 2002). "English proficiency" becomes an artifact synonymous with successful school performance – itself an artifact – as "Limited English Proficiency" becomes an artifact of school failure. When the students in this study entered school proficient in a language other than English, they were labeled as are all ELLs in Texas "at risk of dropping out of school" (Subchapter C: Compensatory education programs, 1995).

What is the paradox of the GT-identified, bilingual student? The construct "gifted" also is an artifact typically equated with school success, although researchers in gifted education point out that not all gifted students are school achievers (Moore III, Ford, & Milner, 2005; Stormont, Stebbins, & Holliday, 2001) and not all students who are high achievers can be considered gifted. In the figured world of the high school in this study and in many public schools across the United States, Spanish proficiency, even when the student demonstrates a high degree of literacy in Spanish, is not equated with academic success, and in fact is perceived to be an artifact of potential school failure. Identities that are misunderstood by schools frequently serve to distance students from exercising the full range of their literate selves. The gifted-identified, former ELLs in this study have, ironically, mastered a literacy of power – English - (Macedo, 2006), which constructs them as academically successful, and simultaneously mastered a home literacy, which, in school contexts for Latina/o youth, frequently may serve to call their academic competency into question. Does their GT status, which in most cases positions them as successful students in their institutional identity, mitigate the deficit identity once attached to them when they were learning English? How do these students react to designations that have been placed on them from the outside, but which are nonetheless identities they may have, to an extent yet to be determined, internalized? As such, "gifted," "bilingual/bicultural/ biliterate" and "LEP" can be considered identities in practice (Holland & Lave, 2001) within the figured world of Chase High School.[4]

I did not make the decision to investigate the lives of students identified as gifted because they represent an elite group of students (Sapon-Shevin, 1994), although that certainly may be an outcome of such identification. Rather, I choose to examine gifted education because I believe, very simply, that every child who comes to school deserves to learn. Historically, it has been

[4] I have replaced the name of the high school and all other proper names in this dissertation study with pseudonyms.

difficult enough for culturally and linguistically diverse students to convince dominant (Urrieta, 2005) educators that their cultural and linguistic capital from their homes and communities (Yosso, 2005) was not an impediment to their academic success. It has become nearly impossible to capitalize on these home and community resources in the era of No Child Left Behind's emphasis on standardized testing. Gándara (2004) notes that although the demonstrated connection between gifted identification and placement in advanced academic classes is more tenuous for Latina/o students. For academically-able, culturally and linguistically diverse students, particularly those attending marginalized schools, gifted education may be one of the few places where they have access to instruction beyond stultifying test preparation. How else are we to read a mantra of "minimum standards" and emphasis on English-language proficiency (O. García, 2009)?

Secondly, I came to gifted education as a twenty-year advocate for equity and social justice in education. Disproportionate access to gifted education programs for students of color and bilingual students – those with whom I had worked most closely in my career as a classroom teacher in Title I public schools – was at its most basic an issue of educational equity.

Finally, in preparation for a presentation on the experiences of bilingual, economically disadvantaged Latina/o students for the National Association for Gifted Children's 2007 Annual Conference, a colleague and I interviewed students from Chase High School and one of its two middle school feeder campuses. The students' observations, particularly regarding language use at school and home, intrigued me. This study is a direct outgrowth of that intense interest in learning more about their experiences.

THEORETICAL LENS: CRITICAL RACE THEORY/LATINO CRITICAL RACE THEORY

To be a critical educator, theorist, and/or researcher is to live with and within the contradictions pervasive racism presents (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). As I argued in the preceding section, contradictions within the gifted education community do indeed exist.

Critical theory recognizes that the beliefs, knowledge, and values created by social constructs such as culture bind both subjects and objects in power relationships (Crotty, 2003; F. González, Moskowitz, & Castro-Gómez, 2001). In applying critical theory to education, Freire (1970/2000), Bourdieu (1977), Aronowitz (2009), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and others argue that schools, through policies and practices that sustain and support the status quo (Giroux, 2009), legitimate and reinforce the power relationships of the broader society. As a result, those in power cement their privilege.

There is precedent for the use of critical theory to interrogate and theorize language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003), bilingual education (Darder, 1991; O. García, 2009), and bilingualism/biliteracy (Achugar, 2008; Suárez, 2002). Indeed, Wei (2000) calls on researchers to move beyond Fishman's 1991 call to examine "Who speaks what language to whom and when?" toward a more critical examination that asks "who maintains/relinquishes which language how and why" (p. 142). Since this dissertation research investigates the language practices and linguistic identity of Latina/o gifted students, this theoretical lens proves particularly instructive.

Given its insistence on foregrounding race and racism, its recognition of the intersectionality of race, class, and gender, and its insistence on historical context, Critical Race Theory (CRT) can provide a powerful lens through which to analyze the school experiences of students of color (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

contributes the additional dimensions of language, immigration, culture, and ethnicity relevant to the lives of Mexican and Mexican-American students (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Moreover, CRT and LatCrit research methodologies challenge traditional paradigms in that the centrality of narrative privileges student voices (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Student perspectives are missing from much of the existing literature on gifted Latina/Latinos. CRT and LatCrit, therefore, are ideal vehicles for studying the phenomenon of giftedness in the lives of Latina/o students in the United States. Through CRT and LatCrit it becomes possible to (1) use the counternarratives drawn from the interviews with gifted Latina/o secondary gifted students to understand their lived experiences and (2) consider the ways in which gifted education produces and reproduces social inequities for Latina/o students in Latina/o majority schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central question that guided this qualitative study was: How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of schools?

Subquestions included:

- In what ways do these students continue to use Spanish in school after it is no longer officially a language of instruction, if at all?
- What role does the gifted Latina/o student's cultural identity play in their experiences at school, if any?
- What contradictions or complementarities do the participants experience between their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities?

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

I used phenomenological research methods to conduct this qualitative study. The research participants were students in grades 9 through 12 at a large, comprehensive high school

in a South Texas city. The target students participated in and were exited from a transitional bilingual education program and were identified as gifted during their elementary school years. I conducted individual semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2006), focus group interviews with groups of participants, conducted classroom observations and field observations in the neighborhood over a period of ten months. I also collected artifacts from the participants, the school and school district. These data were supplemented with statistical data from the US Census Bureau and other agencies.

Ultimately, this dissertation is an examination of agency among students whose educational system views their linguistic and cultural gifts in light of its own, rather than the students', purposes (Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000).

SUMMARY

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the study, the background to the problem, and poses the central research questions.

Chapter Two begins with a review of the literature on the theoretical lenses that inform this study: Figured Worlds and Critical Race Theory/Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). The latter section includes a definition of community cultural wealth and elaborates on the forms of cultural capital it encompasses. Theoretical premises are followed by an overview of the history of gifted education in the United States as well as how it is mandated in the state of Texas. I examine a number of factors in the underrepresentation of Latina/o students in gifted education. This section concludes with a review of the literature specifically focusing on efforts to construct culturally-responsive conceptions of gifted Latina/o youth.

The next section centers on language shift/maintenance/ loss, especially as regards Spanish speakers in Texas. It reviews the literature on education policy and explores the historical antecedents that have led to the present conditions ELLs experience today in South Texas schools. I conclude Chapter 2 by contextualizing my use of the CRT/LatCrit and Figured Worlds theoretical lenses in this study.

Chapter Three, Research Methodology, provides background information on the study and outlines the research design. I first describe gifted and bilingual education program services in the Westcreek Independent School District. I follow those sections with brief introductions to the research site and participants. The methodology section begins with the data collection procedures and the types of data collected. I follow that with a section on Data Analysis. I include an example of the coding procedures I used in that section. I examine my positionality as a researcher just before the chapter summary.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain the study's findings. Chapter 4 begins with a description of the neighborhood surrounding Chase High School. Next, I provide individual, detailed biographical portraits of each research participant. Then I describe the figured world of Chase High School using a methodology that resembles composite Critical Race counterstorytelling (Rousseau & Dixson, 2006; Yosso, 2006). Against that frame, in Chapter 5 I examine how the participants identify themselves culturally, academically, and linguistically before presenting evidence of how the students use community cultural wealth (Yosso's (2005, 2006) forms of capital) to negotiate these identities in school.

Chapter 6 presents the study's conclusions and implications.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

INTRODUCTION

This study proposes to address the central research question: How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of schools? Since instruction for Spanish-language literacy ended for these students in elementary school and was supplemented at the secondary level only through elective "Spanish" classes, the bilingual/biliterate students on whom this study focused managed to acquire socially-appropriate literacy in Spanish in a number of community contexts (K. Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Alvarez, 2001; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000), including online and other media, virtual and actual transnationality, at work, in church, with family and friends. Even though formal review of their Spanish language proficiency does not exist in school contexts, their literacy practices (Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Street, 2003) served as testimony that they are and continue to be Spanish learners. At the same time, they were no longer officially "English Learners," as their acquisition of English had been declared by the State with the removal of the "Limited English Proficiency" label.

It is assumed that literacy outside the classroom – in whatever language – informs and influences school-based academic literacy (Heath, 1983). As such, biliterate students are continually engaged in straddling linguistic borders (Anzaldúa, 1987; K. Gutiérrez, et al., 2001; Pérez, 1999), borders that Jiménez (2000) has suggested "may in fact be the most culturally and linguistically productive spaces in contemporary society" (p. 996), and borders that Rosaldo (1993) advised researchers to view as "central areas for inquiry" (p. 28). This study employed a theoretical framework that combines (1) Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001;

Dixson & Rousseau, 2006b; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009) and (2) Latino Critical Race Theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002; L. Fernández, 2002; Montoya & Valdés, 2008; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Trucios-Haynes, 2001) with (3) the concept of "figured worlds" (Holland, et al., 1998; Holland & Lave, 2001) to study the experiences of nine gifted, Latina/o students negotiating this linguistic borderland.

RATIONALE FOR THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This investigation is multi-faceted, and, correspondingly, this literature review is divided into several sections. Section one addresses the conceptual framework and theoretical lenses for this study: Figured Worlds and Critical Race Theory (CRT)/Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). The next section provides a brief, historical examination of gifted education with an emphasis on gifted Latina/Latino students. Following that is a review of the research on language shift and maintenance, particularly language policy in schools and bilingual education programs. This section focuses on the historical antecedents of current educational practice regarding ELLs in South Texas. The chapter ends with an explanation of how and why the CRT/LatCrit and Figured Worlds theoretical lenses complemented one another in this study.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Epistemological Foundations of Figured Worlds

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) first developed the anthropological concept of "Figured Worlds" as one of four contexts of their greater exploration of identity in their book *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* (Urrieta, 2007a). The authors drew on the earlier work of Vygotsky, Bahktin, and Leontiev to create a sociohistorical practice theory of identity and culture. Within that theory, a figured world is a "socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is

assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 52). These figured worlds "take shape and grant shape to the coproduction of activities, discourses, performances, and artifacts" (p. 51).

In his article introducing a special issue of *The Urban Review* on figured worlds and education, Urrieta (2007a) summarized its characteristics:

> (1) Figured worlds are cultural phenomenon to which people are recruited, or into which people enter, and that develop through the work of their participants.
>
> (2) Figured worlds function as contexts of meaning within which social encounters have significance and people's positions matter. Activities relevant to these worlds take meaning from them and are situated in particular times and places.
>
> (3) Figured worlds are socially organized and reproduced, which means that in them people are sorted and learn to relate to each other in different ways.
>
> (4) Figured worlds distribute people by relating them to landscapes of action; thus activities related to the worlds are populated by familiar social types and host to individual senses of self. (p. 108)

The figured world, then, is the everyday "stable, shared, idealized realm" (Michael, Andrade, & Bartlett, 2007) we all inhabit. It exists because we "agree" it exists, to the degree that by participating we aid in its construction. There are, as Urrieta (2007a) notes, many figured worlds; we may be adept at operating in some, we may never enter others, and we may become part of still other figured worlds only temporarily. Nonetheless, our performance within them, and the

interactions we have with other actors therein, not only serve to shape the figured world but contribute to our identity and our construction of self.

Holland, et al. note that figured worlds are social constructions that exist in historical contexts. They are dialogic, and maintained through social contact and mutual practice. Practices are linked to notions of power and privilege; as they sediment over time, they confer status on certain individuals (i.e. English speakers in the figured world of schools). Such unequal positioning results in questions of power and influence.

Figured Worlds in Educational Research

Countering arguments by some that the notion of a "figured world" is not fully operationalized for research purposes, Urrieta (2007a) notes that the concept is and has been "useful as a tool for studying identity production in education, particular sociocultural constructs in education, local educational contexts, and can also be used as a practical tool for crafting figured worlds of possibility" (p. 112). Several of the articles in that special issue are particularly relevant to this study. One of Rubin's (2007) goals in investigating how students were positioned as unsuccessful learners in the figured world of Oakcity High School was to "more fully theorize a taken-for-granted phenomenon – that students tend to do poorly at urban high schools serving low income students of color" (p. 218). Her conclusion, that student identity related to "smartness" underprepared both compliant and non-compliant students for higher education, is a chilling indictment of public, urban education in the age of No Child Left Behind.

A similar investigation by Michael, Andrade, and Bartlett (2007) examined how success was figured in one bilingual high school. Because the figured world of this urban school valued the students' bilingual and biliterate abilities, and created an environment for learning that employed a caring (Noddings, 2005), humanizing pedagogy (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004), ELL

students were able to take on the identity of successful learners (see also Bartlett, 2007a; Dagenais, Day, & Toohey, 2006).

In the same issue, Hatt (2007) also figures "smartness", although this time from the perspective of students attending a GED program. She details how these students demonstrate agency in their own educational decisions by valuing "street smarts" – the ability to navigate oppressive life circumstances such as poverty and abuse – over "book smarts". One young African-American woman, Calveda, had achieved school-sanctioned "smartness" and had been placed in a gifted program in her high school. Hatt notes that although Calveda possessed the "artifact of smartness" (p. 162), she found the experience alienating because she was the only African American in her class. Hatt points out that in most schools, dominant notions of smartness are "heavily connected to white privilege" (p. 162), particularly in contexts where students of color are in the minority.

Cuero's (2009) case study investigated the identity formation of three Mexican-origin fifth graders in a transitional bilingual education program in a Texas city as they are constructed in several figured worlds: home, "schooling" in general, and individual classrooms within their elementary school. She aptly describes the sorting effect that the annual TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) testing has on ELLs, reporting that "Normalized authoring of achievement is particularly evident in Texas schools" (p. 151). "Good" students were figured as those who conformed to dominant notions of obedient behavior; other students who were successful on the TAKS were not positioned as "good" students if their behavior was noncompliant. (Staiger (2004) also noted how compliant behavior was positioned as synonymous with academic success in her study of the construction of giftedness at Roosevelt High School.) One additional investigation, a 2001 study by Lutrell and Parker, concluded that students use

their literacy practices to manage and construct their identities across three figured worlds: home, school, and the workplace (Luttrell & Parker, 2001). These studies establish precedent for using the concept in the current study.

Epistemological Foundations of Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory

Both Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) grew out of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1991; Haney López, 1996; C. I. Harris, 1991), as an effort to demonstrate that race, particularly the notion of whiteness as property (C. I. Harris, 1991) was central to the US legal system. In their foundational work, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Delgado and Stefanic (2001) define CRT as a "Radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power" (p. 144). Legal scholar and activist Mari Matsuda (1991), described this move as the work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination (p. 1331). The term "Critical Race Theory" was first used to refer to this work at the inaugural conference in 1989.

Yosso (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a; 2005) presents an "intellectual genealogy" of CRT that, in addition to CLS, recognizes the influences of Ethnic Studies, Marxism and Neo-Marxism, Cultural Nationalism, Internal Colonialism, and Feminism. According to Delgado and Stefanic (2001), CRT draws from European theorists and philosophers, such as Gramsci and Derrida, and also is built on what they term the "American radical tradition" (p. 4), citing Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Du Bois, and the Black Power and Raza movements as influential. Cho and Westley (2000), in their comprehensive article on the origins of the theory, also credit resistance movements as a way to place the genesis of CRT "in a broader political

context" (pp. 1379-1380). They particularly note law student activism around several court cases of the 1980s and 1990s *(see Hopwood v. Texas, 1996)* that signaled a retrenchment from corrective action in the arena of racial jurisprudence.

While there are variations, most CRT theorists and proponents would agree on certain basic tenets that underlie the theory:

1. Racism is not an aberration, but an ordinary way of North American life, and a common experience of people of color in the United States (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Solórzano, 1998; Yosso, 2005)
2. "Whiteness" trumps color in all areas and normalizes the dominant, white experience as neutral (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Solórzano, 1998; Yosso, 2005). Enid Trucios-Haynes (2001) notes that in the "Master's House" the "basic home rule is White supremacy" (p. 1).
3. Race is socially constructed, and as such is malleable and manipulable by those in power to suit their particular ends. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001)
4. CRT is interdisciplinary, since racism is interlocked with other forms of oppression such as sexism, classism, nationalism, etc. A corollary of this tenet is its anti-essentialist element: people, by our nature, have many identities and many loyalties, and these loyalties can (and do) overlap and conflict. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a; Yosso, 2005)
5. People of color have a particular story, a "voice of color" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001, p. 9) that stems from our different experiences of oppression and that is rarely heard in mainstream, dominant culture. Thus, storytelling becomes a central feature of CRT

in exposing the majoritarian myths of equality and race neutrality (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a)

6. CRT rejects ahistoricism; we must always be cognizant of the historical contexts that preceded the present moment. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a)

Many would add the tenet that CRT is committed to social justice by offering a libratory, transformational opposition to racism and other forms of oppression (Matsuda, 1991; Solórzano, 1998; Yosso, 2005). As such, CRT seeks to counter dominant discourses regarding people of color (Cho & Westley, 2000), to "challenge and to conflict, rather than to conform or consent" (Jay, 2003, p. 8).

Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

Iglesias (1996), in a foreword to a collection of the proceedings of the third conference on Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), describes how Latina/o, Asian, and African American legal scholars initially came together to explore:

> "how Critical Race theory might be expanded beyond the limitations of the black/white paradigm to incorporate a richer, more contextualized analysis of the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of white supremacy, particularly as it impacts Latinas/os in their individual and collective struggles for self-understanding and social justice" (p. 178).

LatCrit, then, is framed as congruent to CRT (Pérez Huber, 2009) and considers language, language rights, immigration, assimilation, bilingual education and other dimensions of particular and additional oppression of Latinos (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Perea, 1997; Stefanic, 1998). A such, it recognizes that although the dominant US culture defines Latinas/os as White, non-white, or non-racial to suit its own purposes, "many Latinas/os experience their

daily lives as Non-White people in terms of their race, color, national origin, language, culture, and/or citizenship status" (Trucios-Haynes, 2001, p. 3). This manipulation of the Latina/o identity serves to maintain the current racial hegemony by creating a hierarchy that diverts attention from the oppression experienced by *all* people of color (see also Lynn & Parker, 2006).

According to Montoya and Valdés (2008), LatCrit scholars from the beginning established four interrelated functions of LatCrit work: "(1) the production of knowledge, (2) the advancement of social transformation, (3) the expansion and connection of antisubordination struggles, and (4) the cultivation of community and coalition" (p. 1219). In this way, they hoped to integrate theory and community, both within and outside of the legal academy, in a process of praxis. The ultimate goal, then, is to produce and cultivate social justice leaders dedicated to bringing the "Law incrementally closer to Justice" (p. 1219).

CRT/LatCrit in Educational Research

Beginning in the 1990s, critical education theorists adopted CRT and LatCrit as means to analyze the experiences of students of color in US schools (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1998; Tate, 1997). Yosso (2005) defines CRT in education as "a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (p. 74). Those "structures, practices and discourses" include curriculum, instruction, assessment, school funding, and desegregation (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Like CRT itself, CRT in education encompasses multiple movements and traditions, including critical pedagogy, ethnic and feminist studies, and multicultural education (Lynn & Parker, 2006; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002). It insists on recognizing that the historical antecedent of school segregation is a function of inequality in today's schools (Ladson-Billings

& Tate, 1995; Trucios-Haynes, 2001). Using CRT allows researchers to extend the premise of "whiteness as property" to school contexts (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), not only through school funding based on property taxes that ensures that those with "'better' property are entitled to 'better' schools" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, pp. 53-54), but through the recognition that "intellectual property" (curriculum) is itself distributed in similar, unequal ways. Ladson-Billings and Tate take the position that CRT in education serves as a "radical critique of both the status quo and its purported reforms" (p. 62; see also Jay, 2003).

Lynn and Parker (2006), in summarizing what was then a decade of education research using a CRT paradigm, noted that these studies:

(1) drew "important historical links between the work of critical legal scholars and education scholars concerned about racism in education" (p. 269);

(2) established CRT as a scholarship by and for people of color;

(3) linked CRT to other epistemologies regarding school inequality;

(4) advanced the study of CRT and education as forms of scholarship as well as activism.

They credit CRT scholars with important contributions to qualitative research, particularly in regard to researcher positionality and privileging the voices of communities of color. CRT methodology helps researchers conduct qualitative studies in urban education that elucidate subtler forms of racism and avoid "false empathy" (Duncan, 2002, p. 102). Delgado Bernal (1998) proposes that Chicana feminist researchers have a unique cultural intuition – based on their personal experience, existing literature, professional experiences, and the research process itself – that influences their approach to education research. Counterstorytelling (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001), an analytic research methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, 2002) used by a number of CRT/LatCrit researchers (see Bell, 1992; Chapman, 2006; Fránquiz, Salazar, &

DeNicolo, 2011; Rousseau & Dixson, 2006; Yosso, 2006) blends such data sources into narratives that document the persistence of racism in the experiences of people of color in the U.S.. Such accounts contest – "counter" – dominant discourses through qualitative research presented as autobiographical, biographical, portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) or composite stories (Yosso, 2006) In this way, CRT's insistence on a unique voice of color serves as a methodology to disrupt epistemological racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997). My use of counterstorytelling as methodology in this study is elaborated in chapters 3, 4, and 5.

FACTORS IN THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF LATINA/O GIFTED STUDENTS

Introduction

There is persistent concern regarding the underrepresentation of Latino students in programs for advanced academics, and in particular, in gifted education. An Elementary and Secondary Schools Civil Rights Survey reported that although Latino students represented 16.13% of the school enrollment in the year 2000, their percentage among the identified Gifted and Talented was merely 9.54% (Ford, 2005a). This places the odds of a Latina/o student being identified for gifted program services at 0.48 those of a white student.[5] Even after controlling for variables such as socioeconomic status, level of parents' education, and family size, Latina/o students remained less than half as likely as white students to participate in programs for the gifted (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Konstantopoulos, Modi, & Hedges, 2001). Apparently the national situation did not improve in subsequent years: 2003 data from the Information Center on Disabilities and Gifted Education show between 3% and 3.5% of enrolled Latina/o students

[5] Comparisons to white students are made not to construe their experiences as normative, but to underscore inequitable representation in the gifted educational context (see Tejeda & Leonardo (2000)).

identified as gifted (Oakland & Rossen, 2005); for Latinas, the situation is even bleaker – they represented less than one-third of the Latina/o gifted (Konstantopoulos, et al., 2001).

There is no official state demographic analysis of the 7.7% of Texas public school students currently identified as gifted (Texas Education Agency, 2012a). However, Casmer (2010b), after aggregating data from individual district reports to the Public Education Information Management System for school year 2007-2008, reports that Latina/o students constitute only 36% of gifted identified students even though they were at the time 47.9% of Texas public school enrollees (currently at 50.8%, Latinas/os are the majority in Texas public schools) (Texas Education Agency, 2012a). White students, by contrast, represented only 34% of the total school enrollment but 48% of those identified as gifted. In Texas, as in the rest of the country, Latina/o students are not identified for gifted and talented education programs in numbers proportional to their representation in the general enrollment.

Increases in the number of Latina/o students served in gifted programs do not always represent a trend toward equity. Staiger (2004) noted in her ethnographic study of Roosevelt High School that while the percentage of Latinos in the Newtown district's gifted education program increased from a half percent to three percent over the thirty-year period between 1970 and 2001, the percentage of Anglo students more than tripled, from four percent in 1970 to fourteen percent in 2001 – at a time when the district's enrollment of white students decreased from more than 80 percent to fewer than 20 percent. Staiger's California example is, unfortunately, not an isolated case. Bernal (2002b) observes that in Texas's Region 1, an area of the state which borders Mexico, where more than one million Mexican Americans reside and Mexican-origin children constitute over 94% of the school enrollment, the use of multiple criteria for screening potentially gifted students resulted in an increase in Latina/o participants,

but also allowed many more white students entry into the program. During the 1997-98 school year, for example, 9.45% of the Latina/o students in the region were identified as gifted, while fully 24% of the White students were so designated (Bernal, 2002c).

The issue is compounded when Spanish-speaking Latina/o students are considered. Children of immigrant parents are one-third as likely to be tapped for gifted and talented programs, and those who spoke a language other than English in the home were half as likely to be identified (Konstantopoulos, et al., 2001). Perhaps this is one consequence of tough choices school districts make in the face of inequities in resources allocated for gifted education and other programs that serve so-called "fringe populations" (Baker, 2001; Ford & Moore III, 2004). Data from 2001 indicate that school districts in Texas that provided funds for gifted education were 89% larger than those that did not. In a funding system that relies on per pupil allocation, larger districts have more resources for program implementation. Unfortunately, districts in Texas that did not provide funds for gifted education had 22% more bilingual/ESL students than districts that earmarked funds for gifted services, leaving even greater numbers of high-ability ELLs unidentified and unserved (Baker, 2001). This literature review will show that such racial inequities have been characteristic of gifted education from its beginnings (Borland, 2005).

This review does not include the literature focused on identification and screening procedures aimed at increasing the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in gifted education programs.[6] There is an abundance of prescriptive literature regarding test bias and Latinas/os[7], best practices for assessment[8], changes in nomination procedures, identification

[6] Ford et al. (2008), among others, call on gifted education programs to examine practices such as these which have a disparate effect on culturally and linguistically diverse students under the guise of equality (see also Tate, 1997).
[7] See Castellano, 2002; Ford, 2005a; González, 2002; Joseph & Ford; 2006; López, 2000; and Sternberg, 2000; see also Huempfner (2004) for a recent critique of Spanish-language standardized achievement tests; and Kritt (2004) for a critique of standardized testing of kindergarten children.

of students with regard to "factors"[9] and calls to abandon testing altogether[10]. Rather, the goal of this review is to consider conceptions of giftedness that serve to suppress the identification of gifted Latina/o children, to draw attention to practices that serve to marginalize them, and to summarize the extant research on the experiences of those students who, against the odds, succeed in being identified. As such, it is divided into three sections. Because CRT and LatCrit exhort scholars to be mindful of historical context (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Tate, 1997), in the first section I provide a historical overview that reveals that Latina/o students purposely were excluded from the very beginnings of gifted education. Next, I examine how the failure of the field to adopt a single, unifying, inclusive definition of giftedness allows the construction of the white, middle- to upper-income gifted student as the norm. Finally, I focus on the existing literature regarding gifted Latina/o students to provide a contemporary frame for the current study.

The Origins of Gifted Education in the United States

Dai (2010) regards Lewis Terman's 1925 study of children with high IQ as beginning gifted education in the United States in an essentialist tradition of "defining and explaining gifted potential" (p. 13). Such a view construes intelligence, and by extension giftedness, as natural endowments inherent in certain children from birth. Terman noted specific characteristics of giftedness: willpower, persistence, dependability, studiousness, and exceptional intelligence, specifically, an IQ of 140 points or above (Borland, 1997). Terman's definition of giftedness

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[8] See, for example, Baldwin, 2002; Bernal, 2003; Castellano, 2002; Harmon, 2004; Lidz & Macrine,2001; Naglieri, 2003; Naglieri & Ford, 2003. See also Scott & Delgado (2005) for recommendations regarding testing using existing instruments; Fletcher & Massalski (2003); Nielson (2003) and Sarouphim (2002 and 2004) regarding the use of the DISCOVER assessment; Verney, Granholm, Marshall, Malcarne, & Sacuzzo, (2005) for promising new information regarding assessment for Mexican-American students); and Brice & Brice (2004) and González (2006) for a discussion of alternative measures of assessment for gifted Spanish speakers.

[9] See Saenz (2002) for a discussion of the use of portfolios for the identification of gifted Hispanic children.

[10] See Ford & Whiting (2006).

excluded children from immigrant populations as well as most people of color: he set the expected IQ of Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans within a range from 70 to 80 points (Harmon, 2004).

The belief in the empirical science of intelligence measurement that began in the 1920s (Borland, 2005; Dai, 2010) continues to the present day. Fully 73% of school districts use standardized cognitive abilities assessments for identification of gifted students (Oakland & Rossen, 2005), including IQ scores (Borland, 2005).

Conflicting Definitions of Giftedness

The debate in the gifted education community over a definition of its field's central construct continues to the present day. Recent articles that support the notion that giftedness be defined as reaching eminence in one's chosen field (see, for example, Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2011) have reignited debates that divide scholars and researchers in gifted education essentially into two camps: those who believe giftedness is something a person *is*, and those who believe giftedness is something a person *does*. Nonetheless, most recent conceptions of giftedness are more developmental in character in that they consider factors beyond IQ as markers of giftedness. This distinction should not be confused with "nature v. nurture" arguments. All "developmental" theories are predicated on innate qualities and at the same time depend upon some demonstration of that inherent ability. Some continue to support IQ as a valid measure of intellectual ability (Gagné, 2005; Tannenbaum, 1997), others allow for other measures such as above-average performance on standardized measures (Renzulli, 1978), while still others (Sternberg, 1988, 1998) reject these conceptions of intelligence as unnecessarily narrow. Still, all developmental conceptions of giftedness couple superior intellectual ability with other characteristics such as creativity (Gagné, 2005; Renzulli, 1978; Sternberg, 1988),

sensorimotor and sociaoaffective aptitudes (Gagné, 2005), task-commitment (Renzulli, 1978) and insight, intuition, analytical problem solving ability, and the ability to apply knowledge to novel, practical situations (Sternberg, 1997). Also common to all researchers seeking a definition of giftedness is what Silverman (1997, 2004) terms *asynchronous development*: the notion that gifted children's intellectual development is out of step, or asynchronous, with that of their physical and social development, as well as the intellectual development of their age peers. For Silverman, recognition of this construct demands attention to gifted children's unique social and emotional needs.

The failure of gifted education to define itself in terms of cultural considerations may be one reason for the persistent underrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Davis & Rimm, 2004; López, 2000; Sarouphim, 2004). While Plucker and Barab (2005) recognize that "all definitions of giftedness imply the necessity of a social context" (p. 202), the only definition that explicitly considers a cultural context for the construct of giftedness is Sternberg's Pentagonal Implicit Theory of Giftedness.[11] First proposed in 1993, and further refined with Zhang in 1995, this theory grounds the evaluation of his five criteria for giftedness within one's culture of origin. (Coates, Perkins, Vietze, Cruz, & Park, 2003; Esquivel & Nahari, 2000; Sternberg, 2004; Zhang & Hui, 2002). Ortega (2005) asserts that Sternberg's research focuses on conceptualizations of intelligence that are anti-racist and egalitarian.

Bernal (2007) recognizes that appropriate GT services "…educate without deracinating the C/LD (culturally and linguistically diverse gifted) child" (p. 28). Unfortunately, "deracination" appears to be the goal for some mainstream gifted educators. VanTassel-Baska

[11] Sternberg also explains his triarchic theory of human intelligence in context, noting that giving a North American IQ test to someone unfamiliar with our ways of schooling would not provide an assessment of their intelligence, but merely be an indicator of their ability to cope with North American education systems (Sternberg, Kaufman, & Grigorenko, 2008).

(2009) pathologizes students who are identified as gifted through culturally and linguistically appropriate means to the point of questioning their giftedness when they do not meet mainstream education standards. Even the title of her article – "The Dilemma of Striking Gold – Mining the Abilities of Culturally Diverse Learners in Gifted Programs" (emphasis added) – frames these students as problems. The first paragraph is self-congratulatory; VanTassel-Baska could well be one of the educators Bernal (2007) begs to "learn not to educate C/LD children as their special mission in life" (p. 27). This comment is typical: "Gold can also be overlooked easily, found only by serious panners and others who are willing to look beyond the obvious" (p.53). The talents of culturally and linguistically diverse students are not hidden. That they do not appear obvious to VanTassel-Baska and gifted education researchers like her is more often due to the limits of their own experience and perspective. Even as she allows that her study's "effect size was small" (p. 53), the article goes on to lament that students identified as gifted by other than traditional, standardized tests eventually perform lower on state assessments in math and English, as measured over four years, than their gifted peers identified by more traditional means. If non-traditional assessments were culturally and linguistically appropriate for these students at the time of their identification, it should be no surprise that they would continue to be the better measure of these students' abilities, even after four years of gifted education.

This though, is the heart of VanTassel-Baska's dilemma. It appears, then, that culturally diverse gifted students are failing to become the pigmented white kids (Milner, 2007) researchers like VanTassel-Baska term successful. She describes culturally diverse gifted students as "harder to convert through nurturing programs and services into creative producers in our society" (p. 53). Later in the article Van Tassel-Baska fears that an African-American student (while she references a study that included Latina/o students they are not offered as case study examples in

the article) may experience difficulties succeeding in high school because of his questioning attitude toward authority – "albeit born of intellectual curiosity" (p. 59) as Van Tassel-Baska allows. Interestingly, a number of sources (Johnsen, 1997; Manning, 2006; New Mexico State Department of Education Special Education Office, 2008; Silverman, 2003) cite questioning authority as characteristic of gifted learners. In other words, white gifted students are supposed to question authority. Gifted students of color risk being disrespectful when they do.

Such an analysis is problematic on many levels. Clearly, Van Tassel-Baska, by declaring that culturally diverse gifted students become professionals in teaching, engineering, law and medicine, feels that giftedness must be demonstrated through achievement. Like others in the recent debates on definitions of giftedness (see Subotnik, et al., 2011) she would agree that giftedness must produce eminence. [12]

This definition of giftedness relies on the majoritarian tale of self-development. Although VanTassell-Baska pays lip service to society's role in shaping individual destiny, she is troubled by the notion that societal structures can determine the degree of one's success. She offers as example the performance of Michael Phelps in the 2008 Olympics – without analyzing that he is neither culturally nor linguistically diverse – as evidence that people must exert effort to succeed. This analysis does not account for those who acquire eminence by virtue of the circumstances of their birth nor those who strive but have been stymied by law (segregated admissions systems that historically prevented people of color from entering professional schools) or by custom. VanTassel-Baska has no problem implying that students who do not produce are not really gifted – especially students of color. Moreover, this view of talent development among diverse students is only valued and measured in mainstream, white

[12] The entire October 2012 issue of *Gifted Child Quarterly* was devoted to this debate.

definitions of "success", "imminence", "benefit to society", "accomplishment" (Grantham, 2012).

Secondly, VanTassel-Baska's comment that "Such students become the exemplars for their culture and for ours" (emphasis added) assumes that gifted education professionals share a white, mainstream identity and perspective. She does not consider that these students may already demonstrate culturally appropriate ways that are recognized as gifted in their own communities and by culturally-responsive educators. She cautions that family responsibilities will eventually stand in the way of one middle schooler's academic achievement. This perspective should be contested with Irby and Lara-Alecio's (1996) more culturally appropriate finding that gifted Latina/o students characteristically maintain close family ties. VanTassell Baska does not consider what students gain from these ties and responsibilities. She ignores students' ability to negotiate differences between all the communities of which they are a part. She does not recognize Familial and Social Capital as potential sources of strength. In short, VanTassel-Baska fails to account for the role of community participation and cultural wealth in defining what and who is gifted, although one must wonder if the same would be true for mainstream students. Such analyses perpetuate deficit views of students who behave in ways that may be celebrated in their own communities. In essence, they urge students to leave their communities behind in order to seek "success."

Unfortunately, perspectives that ignore inherent racial and class power differentials are prevalent in gifted education[13]. One "dilemma" students like the participants in this dissertation study face is being stigmatized as "less than gifted" because they were identified using non-traditional, culturally and linguistically appropriate means. This is similar to how Affirmative

[13] Indeed, I was referred to the study referenced in this article several times by attendees at a state gifted education conference.

Action gained the stigma of hiring applicants for positions for which some considered they were less than qualified. As a result, dominant attitudes in the gifted education community continue to cast ELLs and other non-mainstream students in deficit. My own experiences as a member of the gifted education community have offered similar anecdotal evidence of this deficit thinking. One teacher in Westcreek's gifted education program asked me if the Spanish language could address the advanced academic demands of the curriculum because there was no word for "badger." (Of course – she was wrong on both accounts.) The director of gifted education in a district close to Westcreek reportedly denied identification of Spanish-speaking gifted students because they could not read Chaucer if they could not read in English. I have attended sessions at state conferences where university professors of gifted education recommend that ELLs acquire English before being screened for GT programs – even though the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students requires districts to screen these students appropriately in languages they understand (Texas Education Agency, 2009). That VanTassel-Baska must ask and answer the question "Are minority students better off in Gifted programs?" re-opens the possibility of all-white gifted education.

The Role of Teachers

The absence of clear definitions of giftedness authorizes teachers, especially classroom teachers, to serve as the principal gatekeepers of gifted education through nominations based on their own perceived, implicit models of giftedness (A. Fernández, et al., 1998; Miller, 2005; Peterson, 2000; Siegle, 2001; Tyson, 2008). Peterson invited 55 middle school teachers to identify which of their students they would nominate for possible inclusion in the gifted education program, and to list the reasons why those students would make good candidates. She reports that their language "reflected 42 different ways of thinking about 'giftedness'" and that

these "gifts" largely reflected behaviors of "individual, conspicuous, competitive achievement valued by the dominant culture " (p. 37; English, 2002).

Research among teachers has served to verify a particular bias against potentially gifted Latina/o students with regard to language-related characteristics (de Wet, 2005; A. Fernández, et al., 1998) and nomination of students for gifted programs (Briggs & Reis, 2004; Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, & Holloway, 2005; Peterson, 2000; Shaklee, 2004). Such bias is perhaps one consequence of the racial mismatch between teachers and the students they serve, given that the majority of classroom teachers are white.[14] Teachers rate most favorably those students who are most like themselves (Peterson, 2000); A. Fernández et al. (1998) concluded that teachers' perceptions of a student's giftedness were more influenced by the *teacher's* ethnicity than had previously been considered. The referral/nomination process, a precursor to gifted identification, may therefore reflect a student's degree of acculturation to the mainstream, and not necessarily characteristics of gifted behavior (Bernal, 2002b; Masten & Plata, 2000; Plata & Masten, 1998; Staiger, 2004) [15]. Not surprisingly, bilingual teachers are more aware than general education teachers not only of ELLs' particular gifts but also how they are overlooked by traditional means of identification (Bermúdez & Rakow, 1990; A. Fernández, et al., 1998).

Efforts to Construct Culturally Conceptions of Gifted Latinas/os -Responsive

Researchers generally have situated their studies of gifted Latina/o students either in community contexts or in schools among teachers. In the earliest of these studies, Bernal and his team conducted three hundred interviews in San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas to seek community

[14] Ford, Moore, and Milner (2005) note that in schools where students of color make up more than 30% of enrollment, 69.4% of the teachers are white.

[15] Staiger quotes one gifted education teacher's attitude toward her Latina/o students: "…And Mexicans, particularly first generation Mexican kids, have no interest in education. Their parents don't even know what's going on" (p. 172).

definitions of giftedness (Bernal, 1974; Esquivel & Nahari, 2000; Masten, 1985). He found that gifted Mexican-American children were thought by their communities to possess a "quiet sophistication and maturity" (p. 28) about their intelligence, avoiding calling attention to themselves. They frequently were observed helping other children in their classrooms or in their homes. From the responses gathered, the researchers put together a culturally-contextual profile of the gifted Mexican-American child, which was later used as a behavioral checklist to identity, along with other testing procedures, thirty-four previously overlooked gifted children (Bernal, 1974). Bernal's work and similar subsequent studies (Márquez, Bermúdez, & Rakow, 1992; Peterson, 2000; E. I. Reyes & Fletcher, 1996) underscored the need to include the perceptions of students' communities (Márquez, et al., 1992) in developing identification procedures for Latina/o gifted students.

Two researchers have focused on Latina/o students' linguistic performance in community contexts. Valdés (2003) recognizes the particular talents of young children who act as linguistic and cultural brokers in their communities, arguing that young children of immigrants who act as interpreters for their parents are demonstrating a particular linguistic giftedness that often goes unrecognized if one relies on dominant views of how gifted behavior is manifested (Valdés, 2002, 2003; Valdés et al., 2000). Recently, Orrellana's (2009) study of young translators in three immigrant communities found that bilingual students who had the most experience translating for their families received higher scores on assessments of math and reading than their peers with less extensive experience. Quoting Valdés, she speculates that this language brokering may increase students' metalinguistic abilities, "literally making them smarter" (p. 114).

While Reyes and Fletcher (1996) included teachers among their participants, Irby and Lara-Alecio (1996) focused exclusively on the observations of educators. They surveyed 61 Texas bilingual classroom teachers of grades kindergarten to fourth on their perceptions of the characteristics of gifted Latina/o students using a ninety-item instrument drawn from a review of the extant literature which included the Bernal and Márquez et al. studies referenced above. The resulting data were sorted into eleven categories using a hierarchical cluster analysis to create a descriptive portrait of gifted Latina/o students that could be used to increase their identification. While teachers identified characteristics common to all gifted children (such as strong academic achievement)[16], of particular interest are the clusters that Irby and Lara-Alecio attribute to cultural differences between Latina/o gifted students and gifted students from other ethnic backgrounds. Cluster Three, which they call *Cultural Sensitivity*, notes that gifted Latina/o students show an "expressed and observable appreciation for Hispanic culture" (p. 130), which included pride in language, respect for tradition (including the oral tradition), and a high value of the history of the native culture.[17] Students also demonstrated an openness to others who showed appreciation for their culture, regardless of their ethnic background. Characteristics of Latina/o gifted children that the researchers linked to their culture but classified in other clusters include strong family ties and a caretaker role in the family as a linguistic and cultural broker between the home, the school, and the non-Spanish speaking community[18] (Cluster 4), and a more collaborative leadership style than that often associated with dominant definitions of giftedness

[16] As mentioned in Chapter 1, one finding has relevance for the current study: like gifted students from other ethnic backgrounds (see Davis & Rimm, 2004; Ford, 2006; Piechowski, 2004; Silverman, 2004), Irby and Lara-Alecio (1996) assert that Latina/o gifted students show an interest in world events, a heightened sense of justice, concern for the needs of society, and particular sensitivity to social needs.

[17] Since the authors used earlier findings by Bernal (1974) and Márquez et al. (1992) to design the instrument, it can be assumed that these characteristics the teachers observed in schools were acquired by the students in their families and communities.

[18] This finding subsequently was corroborated by Valdés (2002, 2003) and Orrellana (2009, above).

(Cluster 5). Lara-Alecio and Irby used these findings not only in developing their Hispanic Bilingual Gifted Screening Instrument (Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Milke, 1999; Lara-Alecio, et al., 1997), but also broadened the definition of what they call "Hispanic Bilingual Giftedness" (Esquierdo, et al., 2008, p. 26) by situating Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness within a context of Latina/o "socio-cultural-linguistic characteristics" (Esquierdo, et al., 2008, pp. 26-27).

Three recent studies have deviated from the identification/retention paradigm that has characterized research on gifted Lationas/os, focusing on the identified students themselves. Worrell (2007), comparing academically gifted African-American, Asian, Latina/Latino and White secondary students on measures of their ethnic identity and other group orientation, found that significantly higher ethnic identity scores predicted self-esteem in Latina/Latino students. Shaunessy, Alvarez McHatton, Hughes, Brice and Ratliff (2007; see also Alvarez McHatton, Shaunessy, Hughes, Brice & Ratliff, 2007 and Shaunessy and Alvarez McHatton, 2008) conducted interviews with eight Latina/Latino middle school students identified as gifted and eight Latina/Latino students from the same school's general education program. They found that even though both groups acknowledged speaking Spanish at home and in the community, the general education students spoke more Spanish during the course of the interviews but the GT-identified students employed more code-switching. The researchers had previously identified code-switching as a potential indicator of giftedness (2006). They contend that students who can successfully code-switch are performing a complex, rule-governed linguistic act while also demonstrating a keen perception of social situations. According to Hughes, et al. (2006) gifted students not only know when it is appropriate to code-switch but use it strategically to manipulate and mitigate the social discontinuities between home and school culture.

Ultimately, the underrepresentation of Latino students in gifted education is unlikely to change substantially unless school districts, state legislatures, and others redefine giftedness and gifted education. While Sternberg and Davidson (2005) believe that the problem lies in gifted programs' failure to adopt theoretical models of giftedness[19], Castellano (2002) charges that many school districts construct definitions of giftedness that serve to exclude all who are not white, middle-class, and academically able. Underrepresented gifted children likely "will never be identified correctly as long as the tools for identification are biased to a cultural and historical background that is not their own" (McGlonn-Nelson, 2005, p. 52).

LANGUAGE SHIFT/LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE: THE TEXAS CONTEXT

Language is symbolic (linguistic) capital (The New London Group, 1996). Competence in the dominant language, according to Bourdieu (1991), becomes "linguistic capital" because those who possess it may profit from its use – under certain conditions. Those conditions demand an unequal distribution of opportunity: access must be limited if the dominant few are to retain the privilege of imposing their standards upon others. Wei (2000) calls this linguistic "auctioneering," where the "market" declares the dominant conventions and sets the stage for unequal competition: for any number of "historical, social, and political reasons, the market value of different languages will not be the same, and there is little opportunity for equal exchanges. The market force determines that there will be winners and losers" (p. 145).

Public schools, as a result of their dominant role in educating the nation's youth, have established a virtual monopoly when it comes to setting and enforcing language policy that privileges English acquisition while simultaneously restricting the development of literacy in other languages. Indeed, García (2009) offers that schools are the most important agent in

[19] Seventy-eight percent of school districts with gifted education programs follow a theoretical model of giftedness in their program design (Bermúdez, Rakow, Sawyer, & Ryan, 1991; Castellano, 2002).

acquisition planning. Because they constitute the primary mode of access to English for children who speak a different language at home, schools are not neutral institutions that provide a nonaligned body of knowledge, but rather, are "sites of struggle and contestation that reproduce the dominant culture and ideology" (Macedo, et al., 2003, p. 40). Debates about language instruction extend beyond discussions of effective pedagogy and have "a great deal more to do with the hegemonic forces that aggressively want to maintain the present asymmetry" (Macedo, et al., 2003, p. 43), the unequal distribution of access Bourdieu theorizes must be present in order for linguistic capital to retain its value. In this way, standard English becomes "a weapon to silence and censor" all who do not possess it (Macedo, et al., 2003, p. 43). Non-dominant languages and literacy practices, then, hold little linguistic and social capital; in the figured world of school, there is little incentive for sustaining and expanding them (Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Yosso, 2005).

Carlos Kevin Blanton titled his book on the history of ELLs in the second most populous state in the nation *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981* (2004). It is a "strange career" indeed. Blanton documents the paradox of Stephen F. Austin's proposal to "Mexicanize" Anglo schoolchildren by teaching them Spanish in the state's infancy juxtaposed against the brutal consequences of discriminatory policy toward children who spoke Spanish as a first language. As in other states, Texas Mexican, Mexican-American, and *tejano* children were subjected first to de facto and then de jure forms of segregated schooling, and language was used as a proxy for this discrimination. For example, the belief that English was the only effective medium for learning meant that Spanish-speaking children often spent years in first and second grades mastering English before being promoted – if they stayed in school at all. At the same time, there are examples of language planning during the 19th century that honors and privileges

bilingualism for white immigrant children speaking German, Polish, Dutch, Czech, and other "European" languages.

The legacy of this "strange career" and its emphasis on English acquisition as the mark of "Americanization" – and indeed, education – is codified into contemporary education law in Chapter 89 of the State Administrative Code (Adaptations for Special Populations, Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating Limited English Proficient Students, 1996). While its provisions guarantee bilingual education and English as a Second Language instruction for public school students, the only stated goal of these programs is the mastery of English language skills, ostensibly to "enable limited English proficient students to participate equitably in school" (Adaptations for Special Populations, Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating Limited English Proficient Students, 1996). There is no mention of heritage language maintenance or development within these provisions, nor is there an explanation of how choosing to educate some children in their native language (i.e. native English speakers) while failing to provide the same opportunities for others constitutes "equitable participation" in schools.

Still, such provisions for native language instruction reflect collective resistance. Blanton (2004) also documents the beginnings of the modern Bilingual Education Movement in the 1960s. Recently, the Texas Association for Bilingual Education celebrated its fortieth anniversary with the release of a documentary detailing the history of bilingual education in the state and celebrating its contributions of activism and advocacy (Texas Association for Bilingual Education, 2009).

Unfortunately, decades of English-only school policy had already taken a toll on Spanish speakers. To this day, Texas Chicanas/Chicanos offer *testimonios* (Delgado Bernal, Elenes,

Godinez, & Villenas, 2006; Haig-Brown, 2003) of corporal punishment for having spoken Spanish at school: as recently as July 2010, adults posting on the Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) Facebook page recalled missed recess and spankings (Bueno, 2010; Carrión, 2010). Such accounts are well-known to many present-day, second and third generation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006) school children. The students who quite literally had English beaten into them frequently became parents who opted not to address their own children in Spanish in order to spare them the same fate. One effect of anti-Spanish policies in schools has been the three-generation language shift pattern described by a number of researchers (M. García, 2003; O. García, 2009; Portes & Hao, 1998a, 1998b, 2002): monolingual, or near monolingual, Spanish-speaking grandparents, bilingual, but not necessarily biliterate parents, and monolingual, English-speaking grandchildren.

This language shift need not be seen as inexorable or inevitable, however. In her study of Spanish use in El Paso, Achugar (2008) found that certain bilingual, biliterate community members prominent in local media and education contest dominant views of English monolingualism by situating them historically and socially and by demonstrating their own linguistic abilities. Other examples of counter-hegemonic language practices in evidence in that community include the decision to reject a monolingual English-speaking candidate as the administrator of a local high school and the development of a bilingual/bicultural degree program at a local university.

Moreover, recent research by Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009) indicates a possible reversal in the trend data noted above for today's Texas youth. Although earlier census data reflected the tendency toward three-generation language shift, there was an increase in the language maintenance of Spanish-speaking youth in the Southwestern United States during the 1990s

(Mora, Villa, & Dávila, 2006), with no diminution in the acquisition of English. Indeed, Anderson-Mejías (2005) documented language maintenance into the fourth and fifth generation in some areas of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. While none of these studies took place in the same part of the state as the current study, their findings in time may prove relevant to the future of Spanish-language education in the state.

CRT/LatCrit in the Current Study

In many cases, as in the district where this study takes place, Spanish-speaking students enter a school system that labels them Limited English Proficient, or in more recent, additive terms, as English Language Learners. Unfortunately, as Gutiérrez et al. (K. D. Gutiérrez, Zepeda, & Castro, 2010) point out, and as has been previously noted in this document, both terms privilege the acquisition of English rather than recognizing the linguistic skills the student already has and continues to acquire. In the figured worlds (Holland, et al., 1998) of such schools, their burgeoning bilingualism is characterized as a problem (Ruíz, 1984) and as such upon enrollment students are marked with an institutional identity (Gee, 2000-2001) that constructs them as "at risk of dropping out of school" (Texas Education Agency, 2010, pp. 12-13) and in need of remediation. That this designation is connected to racism is evident when one considers the privileged position of foreign language programs for white, English-native students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Dominant analyses frequently quote statistics relating the increasing numbers of Spanish-speaking "others" (Spivak, in Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000) in schools less as a call for growing awareness than as a scare tactic (K. Gutiérrez & Orrellana, 2006). CRT and LatCrit shift the gaze of deficit (Valencia, 1997) often used to describe the experiences of Latina/Latino students (Yosso, 2005). CRT/LatCrit serves to question dominant ideologies such as those regarding the language and literacy practices of ELLs.

It should be noted that while not all schools or school districts educate ELLs in the same way, particular historical circumstances referenced earlier in this chapter have precipitated the current language policies in place in Texas schools today. Here, again, CRT/LatCrit's trans-disciplinary, historically-centered emphasis (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006b; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005) makes those events central to understanding the experiences of today's students.

Yosso (2005) notes that using a CRT lens permits the researcher to transcend dominant deficit notions of communities of color. She names six forms of capital through which communities of color nurture cultural wealth: (1) *linguistic* capital, the intellectual and social skills acquired through communication in more than one language; (2) *navigational* capital, the skills attained through negotiating sometimes hostile social institutions; (3) *aspirational* capital, the ability to maintain hopes and dreams in the face of obstacles; (4) *familial* capital, cultural forms of knowledge learned at home and informed by community, history, memory, and cultural intuition; (5) *social* capital, networks of people and resources; and (6) *resistant capital*, skills gained in contesting inequality. This form of capital may include the retention and passing on of language and cultural traditions despite institutional pressure to assimilate. The findings of this study indicate that the participants use these forms of capital to negotiate the discontinuities in their experiences in schools.

Using a CRT/LatCrit epistemological lens requires that the researcher question what is considered "commonsense knowledge", i.e. what has been taken for granted and what has been naturalized. Respectful, humanizing research must be the goal of anti-racist, social justice inquiry. I propose to use the counterstorytelling methodology Solórzano and Yosso (2002) term "other people's stories or narratives" (p. 33). Because they characterize this methodology as the

telling of a person of color's experiences "in relation to U.S. institutions" (p. 33), it fits my purpose in privileging the voices of gifted, Latina/o students at Chase High School.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) propose using counterstorytelling as a research methodology to challenge dominant, deficit storytelling about students of color in educational scholarship that has blamed their academic troubles on "cultural deficiency." They identify three main ways that CRT scholars have used counterstorytelling in their research: through personal stories or narratives, where the researcher recounts her/his own experiences, through relating other people's stories of their experiences with racism, and through creating composite stories. In their own scholarship, they have created counterstories by combining data collected through the research process, a review of existing, relevant literature, and their own personal and professional experiences (see also Delgado Bernal, 1998). In one study (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001b) they chose to present the counterstories of Chicana/o graduate students through composite characters. Yosso (2006) used this form of counterstory in writing about mothers' participation in their elementary children's education, desegregation at an urban high school, and in further investigations of campus life for Chicana/o students. They assert that by using this methodology, CRT researchers are constantly engaged in questioning whose stories are privileged and whose are silenced. While this is one possible form of counterstorytelling, Dixson and Rousseau (2006b; see also Rousseau & Dixson, 2006) note that counterstories need not be fictionalized but may offer chronicles of actual experience. They offer as example Chapman's (2006) study of parents of color fighting for their children's education in the Rockford School District, which she describes as counterstory in that it does "document the feelings, beliefs, events and practices of people who have been marginalized in academic discourses" (p. 71). My

description of the two worlds of Chase High School in Chapter 4 employs a similar counterstorytelling methodology.

CRT allows us to look at gifted education through a different lens as well. CRT reminds us that one way the society maintains racism is to promote equality of *opportunity* and simultaneously resist efforts to ensure equality of *results*. The Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talented (Texas Education Agency, 2009) provides a marvelous example: section 1.6E states that a district's gifted program should reflect the population of the district as a whole. Clearly, the intent is that gifted education services be equitably available to all students, regardless of color, class, gender, disability. But by framing this intent as characteristic of an "Exemplary" program, the state has made it an optional, not obligatory, goal of gifted education programs. The compliance statement in the plan, the one that districts are required to follow, falls squarely in the category of "equality of opportunity": it guarantees all populations *access* to evaluation for participation in GT, but assures gifted services only "if needed" (p. 6). Such an approach allows districts to continue to judge students who need gifted education program services by their own standards, since those districts, under other provisions of the same plan, have the liberty of selecting their own assessment criteria. Phrased differently, students of color and ELLs, under this paradigm, have the opportunity to be judged undeserving of gifted education services.

Moreover, by using a CRT/LatCrit analytical lens centering on the stories of gifted Latina/o students I hope to gain insight into how the "whiteness as giftedness" norm can be transcended. Through this dissertation study, I hope to use what Solórzano and Yosso (2002) identify as four functions of using counterstories in educational research to continue my work in the area of bilingual gifted education: (1) "to build community among those at the margins of

society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice" – drawing the bilingual education community into the struggle for gifted education for high ability students; (2) "challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems" – challenge the elitist, racist notions and actions of those in the gifted education community who seek to block the participation of Latina/o, bilingual gifted students; (3) "open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position" – continue to involve bilingual teachers in advocating for their gifted students; and (4) "teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone" – challenge the dominant, mythologically neutral research paradigms that have served to silence and marginalize people of color in academic writing (p. 36).

In the end, it is reasonable to wonder if the construct of giftedness was a response to a historical necessity (Borland, 2005): as more ethnically and linguistically diverse children entered public education in the 20th century, and began to stay for longer periods of time, schooling was no longer the exclusive purview of the relatively well-off. How, then, to maintain the power of education for that ruling class? Borland (2005), citing Kliebard (1995), maintains that the social efficiency movement in U.S. schools at the time of the creation of gifted education "ensured that technologies of power, rather than more democratic forces, would shape the field" (p. 6).

I concur with Borland (2005, 2003) that the construct underpinning gifted education is generally based more on power than ability and that the sorting of individuals into the gifted and non-gifted is morally untenable. But while I agree that (1) the field of education in general and

gifted education in particular might better serve high-ability children if it concentrated on meeting all children's educational needs and (2) that the search for the gifted child has been largely ineffectual, I advocate for the greater inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse students in programs for the gifted and talented precisely because of the issues of inequitable power. While we are busy changing a system that serves to harm many children, we must not ignore the material conditions of bright, capable, children of color in our schools at present. As their educational needs go unmet, they remain underserved and undereducated, and like other gifted students, risk dropping out to escape unchallenging, demeaning educational experiences (Bermúdez & Márquez, 1998). This advocacy fits within the CRT and LatCrit paradigm of conducting research for the purposes of social justice.

FIGURED WORLDS IN THE CURRENT STUDY

Urrieta's (2007a) article on Figured Worlds in education begins with a discussion of figured worlds, followed by sections on culture, possibility and power; artifacts and materiality; conceptual and material understandings, and finally, identities. I will use his structure as a framework to show why a figured worlds approach is appropriate for this study.

One task of the researcher using this concept is to define the parameters of the figured world. Some of these frames can be very broad (Hatt, 2007; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; see also Urrieta, 2007b). Alternatively, figured worlds can be conceived as a single school (Bartlett, 2007a; Michael, et al., 2007; Nasir & Saxe, 2003; Rubin, 2007) or even a single classroom (Dagenais, et al., 2006; Leander, 2002).

In this study I frame Chase High School as the figured world. Understanding the school as a figured world – one Holland, et al. (1998) characterized as contrived and imagined – helps us to recall that the categories these students have been placed in (for example, literate,

successful, gifted, intelligent) are artificial and dependent upon context (Bartlett, 2007a). McDermott and Varenne (2006) assert that race is tautologically figured in school contexts, and so it is with linguistic difference. Michael, et al.(2007) explain how schools normalize arbitrary categorizations about culturally and linguistically diverse students that in other contexts would be trivial: "…first policies define racial/ethnic groups as a problem, and then set up measures of school performance to document them as problems" (p. 186; see also Cuero, 2009).

Culture, possibility, power

Even as we recognize the arbitrary, contextual nature of the figured world of Chase High School, it is nonetheless a very real environment where certain behaviors are rewarded and others are constrained in ways that reflect and reproduce dominant culture. I will address how using figured worlds helps the researcher to focus on the importance of power later in this section, when I link the concept to CRT/LatCrit.

Artifacts

Holland, et al. note that "figured worlds rely on artifacts" (p. 60). Artifacts provide a means to mediate and evoke the figured world itself. They may be objects, events, practices, discourses – anything that the actors in the figured world imbue with meaning (Urrieta, 2007a). For example, during the time of this study, one artifact – the Radio Frequency Identification Tag (RFID) issued to all Chase students at the beginning of the school year – was given much attention by teachers, students, and administrators.

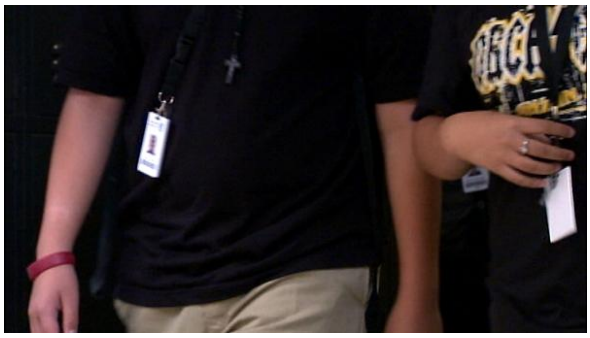


Figure 2.1: Students wearing Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags.

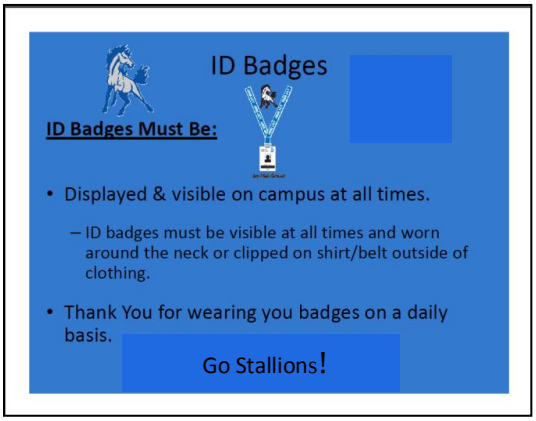


Figure 2.2: Instructions to Students on how to wear the RFID. Chase High School Website. (Westcreek Independent School District, 2013)

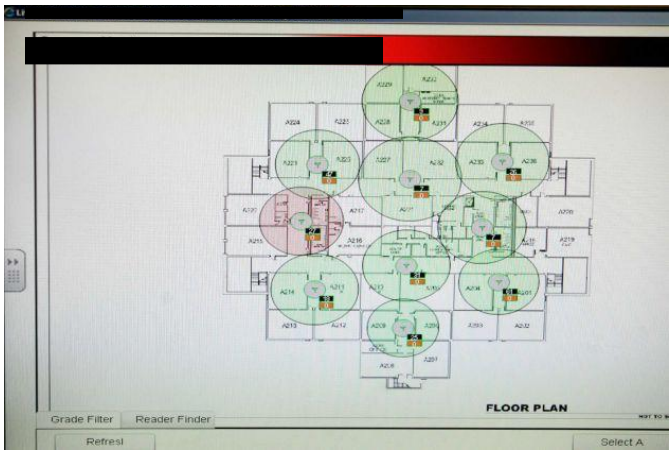


Figure 2.3: Example of RFID technology in use at the middle school.

Together with other objects – posters in the hallways, signs on the front doors, morning announcements, information on the school's website, parent notification letters, the school's

closed circuit TV loop, the marquee in front of the school – the RFID evokes the school's constant emphasis on student attendance through surveillance of its students. The administration has a practice of rewarding classes if everyone in attendance is wearing their RFID. Such practices evoke daily life at Chase.

Artifacts are not only tangible objects. Events, discourses (Urrieta, 2007a), practices such as the use of Spanish in school or caring relationships between staff and students (Vågan, 2011), and labels (Hatt, 2007; Michael, et al., 2007) can be considered artifacts when they convey meaning through the actions and practices of individuals within the figured world. When artifacts acquire this meaning they mediate power relationships in the figured world. In this way, artifacts mediate the thoughts, feelings and actions of the individuals. This in turn obscures the fact that artifacts are social constructions and are not real or natural. For example, the label "at risk" loses its explanatory suffix *"of dropping out of school"* and becomes static, fossilized shorthand for non-dominant[20] at Chase and in the figured world of Texas public schools. Practices such as standardized testing, the sorting of students into different classes (ESL, Advanced Placement, remedial), and the acceptance or rejection of students' Spanish literacy are also artifacts in this figured world.

As was discussed previously, schools in Texas have positioned Spanish literacy as potential school failure. In this figured world, then, it becomes possible for extensive literacy in Spanish, in the absence of English proficiency, to be construed as deficient. Students who are not deemed to be proficient in English are considered to be "at-risk." Conversely, rudimentary,

[20]Although " Saunders (2002), citing Tidwell and Garrett (1994), cautions against creating an "at-risk syndrome" (p. 100) by using the term without clarification, a cursory review of gifted education literature reveals that "at risk students" have been defined as those who are culturally different, live in poverty (Greenberg & Coleman, 1993; Kitano & Lewis, 2005; Morales, 2010), or may be at risk of drug abuse, sexually transmitted disease, delinquency, underachievement (Seeley, 2004). One study assumes that readers will understand the term without explanation (Gonsoulin Jr, Ward, & Figg, 2006), while Barone and Schneider (2003) characterize the setting of their study as an "at-risk urban school" (p.259).

monolingual English literacy as measured by meeting minimum standards on state assessments is situated as academically successful. Jeniffer, the focal student in Cuero's (Cuero, 2009; Cuero & Dworin, 2007) study of fifth grade bilingual students as they prepare for the Texas Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (TAKS), has already internalized this position. In the figured world of her elementary school, where teachers and students devote much time to preparing for these tests, Jeniffer has come to believe that mastery of all the objectives on the English version of the Reading TAKS determines whether a student can be considered a good reader and, by extension, a successful student. Cuero notes that despite Jeniffer's prior success in reading and language arts in Spanish, her continued exceptional writing ability in Spanish, her emerging bilingual literacy, the opinions and comments of her teachers, and her report card grades, Jeniffer had such serious doubts about her academic competence that when she went to middle school, she opted not to take the honors classes her teachers had recommended for her.

Given that Spanish literacy is figured as detrimental to students' academic success in Texas public schools, the "gifted" label was an artifact of special interest in this study. While synonymous with dominant conceptions of school success, the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talented (Texas Education Agency, 2009), taken to its extreme, actually gives students an opportunity to be identified as gifted for this literacy, where in other school contexts this ability is not recognized: recall that the definition of giftedness exhorts districts to identify as gifted those students who are exceptional outliers among others of their "same age, experience, and environment" and that students are to be "assessed in languages they understand" (Texas Education Agency, 2009, p. 18). As a result, this study considered not only how "giftedness" and gifted students were positioned in the context of Chase High School, but how these students came to be identified as well as their prior gifted education experiences.

Conceptual and Material Understandings

Urrieta (2007a) notes that: "As people's subjectivit(y)ies becomes better organized around certain issues important to the figured world, their behavior manifests the ascription of new meaning and the favoring (of) certain activities and practices over others" (p. 110). As such, this study examined how students' cultural, academic, and linguistic identities are figured at Chase High School by artifacts (such as the RFID, classroom assignments, homework), discourses around the use of labels (such as gifted, bilingual, regular education, advanced academics, at-risk, English proficient or Limited English Proficient), and practices (for example, Spanish proficiency and classroom routines).

But identity production is dialogic. Therefore, in keeping with the research questions, this study privileged the meanings the participants ascribed to these practices, labels, artifacts, and actions. Their behavior and their narratives demonstrated the ways they came to identify and understand themselves in the figured world of Chase High School. Moreover, these students' behaviors and narratives revealed their agency in strategically using capital connected to community cultural wealth to negotiate these identities. I will elaborate these points in Chapters Four and Five.

Identity

Ultimately, an investigation of how students navigate conflicting worlds will involve issues of identity. Urrieta (2007a) speaks of the "narratives born out of historical significance (both oppressive and liberating) as well as the distribution of power, rank and prestige (or the lack thereof) that they either accept, reject, or negotiate to varying degrees" (p. 111). The central research question, *How do gifted Latina/o students who have exited a transitional bilingual*

education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities? takes as given that these students are agents – authors of themselves – even as they are authored by others.

Focusing on schools and schooling through the lens of the figured world helps to meet one of the goals of all research: to make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar. To examine schools as institutional power while recognizing the agency of individuals within those institutions disrupts and challenges categories, such as "at-risk," that have over time become so common that we consider them natural. Examining schools through power relationships also provides a natural connection to CRT and, in the case of Latina/o communities, to LatCrit. The following section speaks to how I connected both theoretical frameworks in this study.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CRT, LATCRIT AND FIGURED WORLDS IN COMPLEMENTARY SYNERGY

Figured worlds and CRT/LatCrit are complementary in a number of ways. Holland et al. remind us that positionality matters in figured worlds, as it does in Critical Race Theory and LatCrit. They also note that "figured worlds are historical phenomena" (p. 47; see also Urrieta, 2007b); CRT exhorts researchers to be mindful of historical contexts. CRT and LatCrit are predicated on contesting power. Figured worlds serve to distribute power (Urrieta, 2007b); Cuero (2009) reminds us that the use of figured worlds allows us to consider "the dialogic influences of power and structural constraints" (p. 144) In schools, smartness is associated with power (Hatt, 2007) but ELLs are associated with deficit – a lack of power. My central research question positions the focal students as agents, as authors of themselves (figured worlds). Their Mexican/ Mexican American, Spanish-speaking, economically oppressed identities (CRT/LatCrit) established the conditions of their school experiences. Yet it is these very identities, when viewed through the prism of community cultural wealth, as well as others they have gained

through school (gifted, athlete, cadet) that facilitated their self-authoring, despite institutional pressures. The integration of these two theoretical frameworks deepens our understanding of their experience.

In essence, Figured Worlds and CRT/LatCrit are tools of both theory and analysis. In Chapter Three I show how they were used as such in this study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

INTRODUCTION

Milner (2007) warns of the harm that can be done to already marginalized students if the researcher fails to recognize how her/his own cultural ways of knowing, and those of the participants, shape how the research is conducted. In this article proposing Critical Race Theory as a framework for education researchers working among communities of color, he states:

> *"How* education research is conducted may be just as important as *what* is actually discovered in a study. Moreover, who conducts the research, particularly what they know, and the nature of their critical racial and cultural consciousness—their views, perspectives, and biases—may also be essential to how those in education research come to know and know what is known. (Milner, 2007, p. 397, emphasis in the original)

Urging researchers to disrupt notions of normality and deficit perspectives, Milner posits that "the research community may need to be exposed to theories, perspectives, views, positions, and discourses that emerge from the experiences and points of view of people and researchers of color" (p. 390).

Given that he is both a CRT scholar and researcher of the gifted Milner's observations are particularly apropos to the current study, which uses a CRT/LatCrit theoretical lens. Moreover, his call for attention to the lived experiences and perspectives of people of color – both as researchers and as participants – and attention to potential bias foreshadows my selection of phenomenology as an appropriate research method to explore the seeming paradox in the central research question: How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of public school? The paradox lies in the contradictory ways students' identification as both bilingual and gifted are figured (Holland, et al., 1998) in Texas public

schools. Students whose primary language is not English are upon enrollment considered at-risk of not finishing high school (Subchapter C: Compensatory education programs, 1995). Yet a subset of those same students can be identified as gifted, with its implications of school success, and if so identified must be offered services to meet their needs as high academic achievers (Texas Education Agency, 2009). The nine research participants were Latina/o high school students who were identified as gifted while they were also in an elementary transitional bilingual education program.

I begin this chapter with my research design – why I selected phenomenology as a research method, and how this methodology both informs and is informed by my theoretical frameworks of Figured Worlds (Holland, et al., 1998) and Critical Race Theory/Latino Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Next I provide background information on the Westcreek Independent School District's Gifted Education and Bilingual Education programs to situate how a student is positioned as gifted and how a student is positioned as bilingual within my research setting. I then describe that research setting through an increasingly narrower focus – the city, the district, the neighborhood, and finally the school - in the following section. Following that, I provide demographic information on my participants in summary form. The methodology section continues with an explanation of my data collection activities. I then describe my Data Analysis process. I comment on my Researcher Positionality before ending the chapter with a summary and preview of Chapter 4.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research is implemented in order to gain insights into specific practices as they exist within a particular context (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004), or, put another way, "to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations" (Stake, 2006, p. 3).

The focus of a phenomenological study is "understanding the essence of experiences about a phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, p. 65) by describing and examining the lived experiences of the people involved and the meaning that people make based on their firsthand encounter with their social worlds (Creswell, 2003; Groenewald, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the phenomenon of interest is the paradox in school policies and practices that simultaneously position gifted Latina/o high school students as both at-risk and at promise. As was explained in Chapter Two, the theoretical framework for this study combines Critical Race Theory/Latino Critical Race Theory with the construct of Figured Worlds (Holland, et al., 1998) to investigate how gifted-identified, former ELLs understand and navigate their multiple identities. Figure 3.1 is a graphical representation of this study.

Phenomenological methods have been used previously to study participants' experiences and the meanings they make about school by education professionals in the field[21] as well as in recent dissertation studies[22]. These dissertations have investigated Latina/o high school students' language and literacy experiences as Spanish speakers in English-dominant school settings (Duarte, 2004; Watson, 2010), Latina/o students' academic motivations (Ebie, 2009; Munro, 2009) and cultural mismatch among ELL middle school students (Fraczek, 2010). The Nisly (2010) and Zabloski (2010) studies use participants who have been identified as gifted. Of the above examples, Cross et al. (2003) is particularly relevant to the current study. The authors used a phenomenological approach to investigate their central research question: "What is the lived experience of attending an elementary magnet school for gifted students?" (p. 205). Cross, et al. (2003) noted that a phenomenological approach allowed them to capture a more nuanced

[21] (Tracy L. Cross, Stewart, & Coleman, 2003; De León, Pea, & Whitacre, 2010; Schulz & Rubel, 2011; Tucker, Dixon, & Griddine, 2010; Zur & Eisikovits, 2011)
[22] (C. L. Collins, 2008; Duarte, 2004; Ebie, 2009; Fraczek, 2010; Hamilton, 2009; Hartshorn, 2007; Hobbs, 2010; Munro, 2009; Nisly, 2010; Watson, 2010; Wodnicki, 2009; Zabloski, 2010)

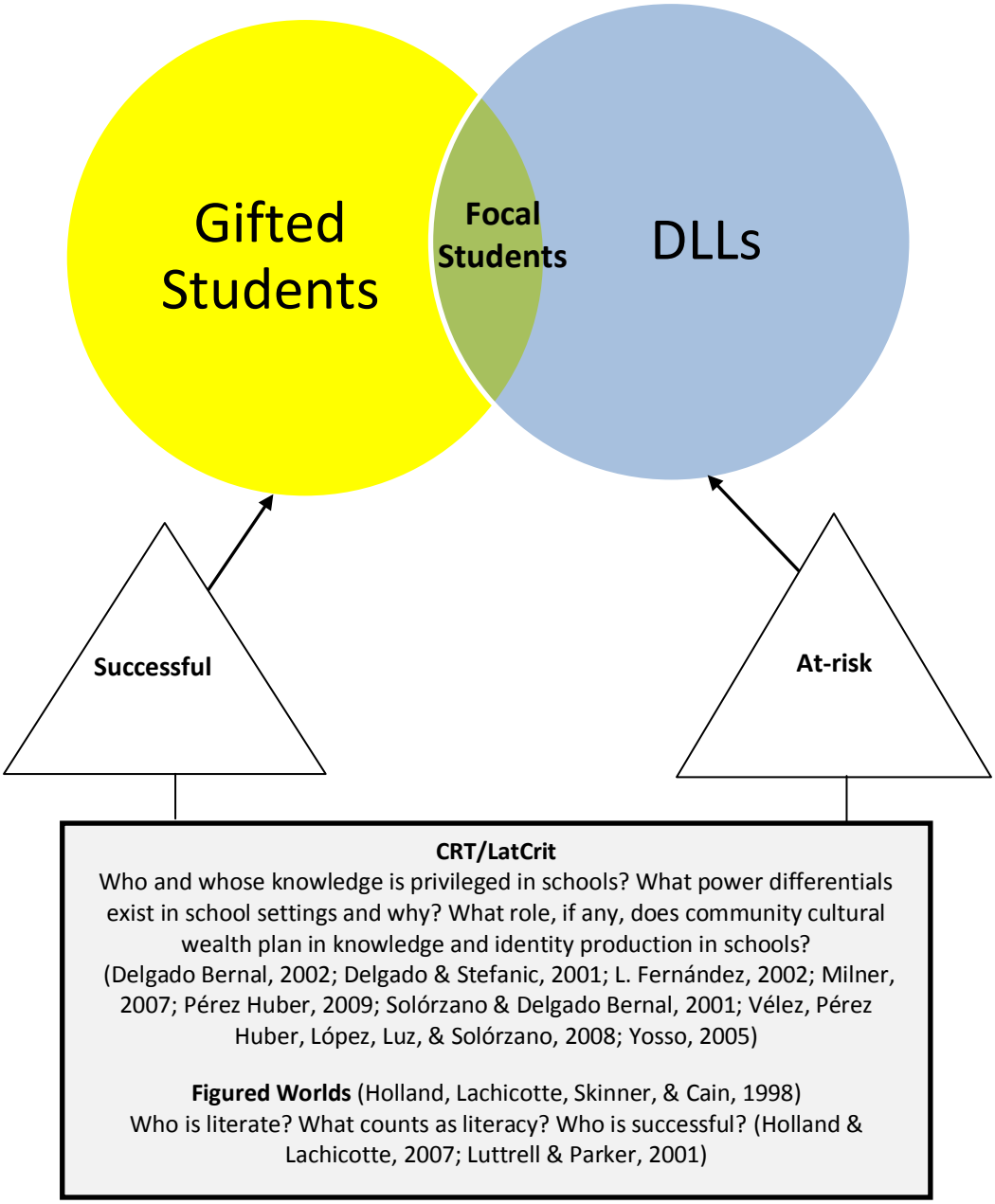


Figure 3.1. *Graphical Representation of the Dissertation Study.*

representation of the lives of their participants and thus permitted them a clearer understanding of their experience. The resulting study of fifteen gifted elementary students[23] included interviews with each student about her/his experiences in the program in general and asked

[23] While the researchers note that the selected students ranged in age from 6-12 years and were enrolled in grades 1-6, they provided no information about the students' gender or ethnicity (Tracy L. Cross, et al., 2003).

participants to recall specific situations that exemplified those experiences. According to the researchers, the interviews were open-ended by design to elicit "rich descriptions" (p. 207) of actual events rather than student participants' attitudes and feelings about them. Data analysis included identifying gifted students' experiences as they perceived themselves relative to other students, particularly with students not identified as gifted. Citing two other studies of gifted students using phenomenological methods (Coleman & Cross, 1988; Vespi & Yewchuk, 1992), Cross, et al. (2003) call for the greater use of this "promising approach" (p. 201) to studying gifted education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Phenomenology provides a complementary methodological approach in light of the two theoretical lenses through which this study is conceived: Critical Race Theory/Latino Critical Race Theory (CRT/LatCrit) and Figured Worlds (see Figure 1). As cited in Chapter 2, Holland et al. (1998) note that "figured worlds are historical *phenomena*" (p. 47, emphasis added; see also Urrieta, 2007b). Mindful, focused attention to historical context is one of the precepts on which CRT/LatCrit are based (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006b; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and moreover are centered on the life histories of participants (Pérez Huber, 2009). CRT and LatCrit methodologies challenge traditional research paradigms in that the centrality of narrative privileges student voices (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 24), perspectives missing from so much of the existing literature on gifted Latina/Latino students (L. Fernández, 2002). This insistence on the importance of voice as a unit of analysis central to data-gathering is congruent with phenomenology's focus on participants' lived experiences.

Additionally, Cuero (2009) observes that figured worlds approaches interrogate "dialogic influences of power and structural constraints" (p. 144). This approach complements educational

research conducted using a CRT/LatCrit theoretical perspective that recognizes that schools operate to simultaneously deny power to some students efen as they empower others (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Students, particularly students of color and moreover ELLs, are positioned as largely powerless over the decisions made for and about them in Texas public schools. Phenomenological methods, which foreground the experience of the participants, open a space for the subordinate voice in the power dialogue. As used in this study, a phenomenological approach recognizes not only the positional identities imposed on students through the relationships they maintain and the institutions in which they participate, or as Rubin (2007) described, the "practices, discourses, categories, and interactions of an urban high school" (p. 218), but also their own agency in actively negotiating their cultural, linguistic and academic identities within this figured world. According to Treviño (2000), "Phenomenology provides us an avenue to truly explore multiculturalism…This research approach seeks to maintain the true voice of those who have used their assets to survive in their chosen environments" (p. 19) – or, in the case of public high school students, the environments to which they have been assigned.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary research question in this study was:

- How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of schools?

Subquestions included:

- In what ways do these students continue to use Spanish in school after it is no longer officially a language of instruction, if at all?

- What role does the gifted Latina/o student's cultural identity play in their experiences at school, if any?
- What contradictions or complementarities do the participants experience between their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities?

I chose Salmon P. Chase High School in the Westcreek Independent School District in San Antonio, TX, as the primary data collection site to address these research questions. The nine student participants all previously attended a transitional bilingual education program and represented 1.98% of Chase students who were identified as gifted (Texas Education Agency, 2012b) according to the procedures established by the Westcreek district.

BACKGROUND

Gifted Education in Westcreek

Gifted education in the Westcreek Independent School District is based on Joseph Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010), described by the *Phi Delta Kappan* as a research-based theory operationalized for practitioners (Renzulli, 1978)[24] which defines giftedness as the intersection of above-average ability, task-commitment (motivation), and creativity (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Jolly, 2005; Renzulli, 1978, 2002, 2005). Because Renzulli offers that there is little evidence that test scores predict future success in school or in life, [concentrating merely on test performance leads to identification of what Renzulli terms "Schoolhouse Giftedness" (2005, p. 253)], he broadens the consideration of innate ability beyond simple high IQ to performance in the top 15 – 20% on standardized measures of aptitude and/or achievement, noting that there are more productive people below the

[24] Rezulli asserts that subsequent research has reaffirmed the validity of the model (2005).

95th percentile than above it (Renzulli, 1978)[25]. While he acknowledges that this type of giftedness is important, it is only significant in combination with what he calls "Creative-Productive Giftedness" – the Creativity and Task-Commitment components of his model (Renzulli, 2005, p. 254). In other words, according to Renzulli, giftedness is something a person both does and is.

A Power Point presentation for parents prepared by parents on the GT Advisory Council on Westcreek's GT program internet page outlines the process for identifying gifted students in Westcreek (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). That process is summarized in the table below.

Table 3.1. Process for Identifying Gifted Students in the Westcreek Independent School District

Nomination	Students are nominated by parents, educators, other students, themselves, community members, or superior test scores
Testing	Standardized abilities, achievement and creativity tests are administered on campus by trained administrators. Tests are available in Spanish and several other languages.
Checklists	Parents and educators complete a Behavioral Characteristics checklist.
Evaluation	The campus GT specialist compiles scores on a matrix profile. Scores are reviewed by a campus selection committee composed of the GT specialist, a counselor, and a campus administrator.
Identification	Campus selection committee makes a decision to identify a student as gifted based on a unique cutoff score determined for each campus. Other or prior information may be considered at this stage.
Placement	Parents are notified of the results and must consent to placing identified student in GT program.

Students may be tested at any grade but no more than once every twelve months. In addition, the assessments are aligned with the three areas of Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception: above-average ability (standardized abilities and achievement testing, as included in Line 2 of

[25] This is an allusion to the widely-accepted idea that the gifted represent the top 5% of all students in schools at any given time (Borland, 2009).

Table 3.1), creativity (testing using a standardized creativity measure, as included in Line 2 of Table 3.1), and task-commitment (parent and educator behavioral checklists, as included in Line 3 of Table 3.1).

Westcreek's gifted education program is characterized as a general intellectual abilities program and as such is not geared to subject-specific academic giftedness nor to superior ability in fine arts or athletics (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). According to the program brochure and Westcreek Continuum of Services Pyramid available on the website, program services are offered according to a student's grade placement. The table below summarizes program services for gifted students in elementary, middle, and high school.

Table 3.2. Program Options for Gifted Students in the Westcreek Independent School District

Elementary (Grades K-5)	Pull-out instruction once weekly with campus GT specialist
Middle School (Grades 6-8)	Accelerated math, honors and Pre-Advanced Placement classes, multi-disciplinary units offered through gifted education classes
High School (Grades 9-12)	Magnet school programs, accelerated math, honors, Pre-Advanced Placement (PreAP) and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, dual credit classes with local community college, seminars, GT Leadership class (elective for freshmen and sophomores), Independent Study Mentorship (elective for juniors and seniors)

Credit by examination, which allows students to test out of and receive credit toward graduation for material they have already mastered, also is available at all three levels (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010).

It should be noted that Westcreek's identification procedures and its program services are in compliance with requirements outlined in the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

Bilingual Education in Westcreek

In Westcreek, newly-enrolling students whose Home Language Survey indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home are referred for testing to determine their English proficiency[26] (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). According to the program brochure, the state of Texas requires the district to provide a bilingual education program for elementary-age students who are learning English and whose home language is Spanish (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). Spanish-speaking students and students who speak a home language other than Spanish are offered English as a Second Language Services in secondary school.

Transitional bilingual education programs, the most common type of bilingual education in the United States (Freeman, 2004), provide native language content area instruction to ELLs while they are taught English through structured English as a Second Language (Crawford, 2004). Instruction in the native language is provided solely to keep students from falling behind academically as they acquire English. Unlike dual language and developmental/maintenance bilingual education programs, the goal of transitional bilingual programs is not for ELLs to simultaneously develop second language proficiency while retaining and developing their native language but rather to transfer and assimilate ELLs into English-only instruction. Accordingly, the amount of native language instruction decreases as students move to higher grade levels, and such programs typically are offered for only a few years of an ELL's academic life. Successful

[26] Chapter 89. "Adaptations for Special Populations Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating Limited English Proficient Students," 1996.

students "exit" bilingual instruction once they reach proficiency in English. As a result, students enrolled in transitional bilingual education programs tend to become monolingual English speakers over time (Crawford, 2004; Freeman, 2004).

Although not specifically described as such on the district's website, Westcreek's bilingual education program is transitional in nature. Its primary goal is that enrolled students will be successful in an all-English curriculum within seven years (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). The program is only available to students enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through five. In Westcreek, students typically leave the bilingual program in grades 3, 4, or 5 after successfully completing statewide assessments in English, a program model often referred to as a "late-exit" transitional model (Crawford, 2004; Westcreek Independent School District, 2010).

SETTING

The Westcreek Independent School District is located on the northwest side of a major city in South Texas where 62.5% of the population is Latina/o (56.4% of Mexican-origin) and where 41.6% of the population speaks Spanish at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The large district of over 99,000 students spans urban, suburban, and rural areas. Information obtained from the Westcreek website indicated that the district had 11 high schools, including five magnet programs (Westcreek Independent School District, 2012). Salmon P. Chase High School is located on the urban west side of the district, where 80.85% of the residents identified as Latina/o (70.33% of Mexican origin) and 56.58% of the residents spoke Spanish at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Research Site: Salmon P. Chase High School

There were 2,941 students enrolled Salmon P. Chase in the 2011-2012 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2012b), about average for high school enrollment in Westcreek. Chase houses Westcreek's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Magnet (STEMM), one of the district's five magnet programs, as a school-within-a-school, and enrollment figures included both the magnet and general education programs. Gifted students constitute 17.2% of Chase's enrollment, due in part to the magnet program. This is well above the district average of 10.2%. Chase also exceeded the district average in students receiving special education services (12.5% as compared to 11.5%). Chase is rated "Academically Acceptable" under the state's accountability system, as were most of the other district high schools (Texas Education Agency, 2012c).[27] This means that at least 70% of Chase's students passed the mandated assessments in reading/language arts, writing and social studies, at least 65% passed in mathematics, and at least 50% passed in science (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

At the time of the study, Chase was considerably browner and poorer than the average Westcreek school. Although the district was majority Latina/o (68.3%), Chase's Latina/o students made up 82.7% of its enrollment, and although slightly more than half – 53.7% - of Westcreek's students were considered to be economically disadvantaged, Chase, at 70.9%, exceeded this by a wide margin.[28] The school also had a larger population of at-risk learners (61.7%) as compared to a district average of 38.3%.

[27] Two schools received ratings of "Recognized," and its stand-alone health magnet was rated "Exemplary" (Texas Education Agency, 2012c).

[28] Only one other high school in Westcreek enrolled a greater percentage (71.9%) of economically disadvantaged students.

Despite the fact that Dual Language Learners represented only 4.3% of its enrollment, compared to a district average of 7.4% (Texas Education Agency, 2012b), Chase likely enrolled a high number of former bilingual students. Chase's feeder pattern included more elementary schools that offered transitional bilingual education programs – seven of the ten from which it eventually received students[29]. Chase's demographics reflect the typical U.S. high school attended by Latina/o students:

- Forty-five percent of Latina/Latina students in the United States attend high schools where more than 45% of the enrollment is considered to be economically disadvantaged, compared with 9% of whites (Fry, 2005)
- While only ten percent of US high schools have enrollments that exceed 1,838 students, these schools educate 56% of Latina/o high school students. The average US high school enrollment is 754 students (Fry, 2005).
- Latina/o students who attend schools in what is called the "urban fringe", metropolitan areas outside the central city, are more likely to attend these "super-sized" high schools (Fry, 2005, p. 8).

Chase over the Years

The library entrance bears silent witness to how Chase High School has changed over the years. Panoramic photographs of each graduating class since the school opened hang above glass-fronted display cases. Each year, the white faces decrease and the brown and black faces increase, although the number of graduates holds steady. The first display case is empty except

[29] Although the Westcreek district website notes that one other high school has seven bilingual feeder elementary campuses, these include one elementary campus that opened in the 2010-2011 school year and as a result had no high school-age students at the time of the study. The newest campus in Chase's feeder pattern opened in 2006; a fifth grader who attended that school when it opened could be enrolled at Chase as a sophomore in 2011-2012, the year this study took place (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). Nonetheless, Chase's ratio of 7/10 bilingual feeder elementary campuses exceeds that of the other school at 7/12 bilingual elementary campuses.

for two STEMM trophies from a 2010 science competition. The next latest academic trophies won by Chase students not affiliated with the STEMM are dated 1993.

The school's main entrance and lobby are described in the Chase 2012-2013 Student Parent Handbook as "a formal meeting place where dignity and tradition prevail" (Westcreek Independent School District, 2012). From the center lobby, two open staircases lead to the second story. They are adjacent to two large display areas: one, called the gallery, features student visual artwork. The other permanently displays a larger-than-life statue of the school mascot, the rearing Silver Stallion, front legs pawing the air, teeth bared. The front office and administration suite, attendance office, nurse and counseling suite ring the lobby, and the walls between them, like the entrance to the library, are lined with trophy cases. One of them is dedicated to cheerleading. The trophies in it date from the early days of the school through 2008. The trophies on the left side of one long case were awarded in academic competitions held in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by athletic trophies from Chase's early years into the 1990s. The last third of the case is filled with recent ROTC trophies from the 2000s. The last trophy case, the one closest to the attendance office and the front entrance, displays awards all related to ROTC – plaques honoring drill teams, trophies for orienteering, rocketry. With the exception of some of the cheerleading trophies, every award that Chase has won since 2000 and chosen to display in the front lobby has something to do with ROTC.

Chase was the third comprehensive high school built in the Westcreek District. When it opened in 1967, the majority of its students were white. Today, white students are in the minority – and the majority of them do not attend Chase. Since 1997, the Chase campus also has housed the Westcreek District's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Magnet program (STEMM). The STEMM was created, in part, to prevent the "brain drain" by the district's other

magnet schools of the Chase area's brightest students (Niles, 2012). After opening with merely 60 freshman students drawn only from Chase's two feeder middle schools, the STEMM now enrolls more than 650 students who, since 2004-2005, live in all parts of the Westcreek district. If the STEMM program was originally conceived of as a school within a school, it has effectively become a school apart. The most recent freshman class of 163 enrolled only 28 students who lived in the Chase area (Westcreek Testing and Evaluation, 2012). Indeed, most of the students enrolled in STEMM – 76.6% - now live outside the Chase neighborhood. Twenty-three percent of them are white, compared to 4.5% of students who are enrolled in Chase's regular education program. Six percent of each school is African American, but three times as many Asian students attend STEMM as Chase (Westcreek Testing and Evaluation, 2012).

Students must apply to attend STEMM, even those who live within the Chase attendance area. The application process includes an essay. Eligible students have at least an 80 or higher average in core subjects, passing scores on the state required tests, good attendance, and a clear discipline record. Once admitted, students are expected to maintain a "higher standard of appearance" than what might be expected at a "traditional high school" (Niles, 2012). Further, they commit to earning three credits of the same International Language, additional academic electives, and completing an approved academic research project every year.

PARTICIPANTS

Recruitment of participants began in Spring 2012. I enlisted the help of the campus Gifted and Talented specialist in identifying potential participants who met the study criteria:

- 14 – 19 years of age
- identified as gifted while enrolled in a bilingual education program
- exited from bilingual education in grades three, four or five (i.e. late-exit bilingual)

- live in the Chase neighborhood feeder pattern, whether attending Chase or the STEMM

Over the course of several afternoons I met with small groups of four to five potential participants in her office on the Chase campus, a familiar location for students in the gifted program, to discuss the investigation. I described the purpose of the study and the interview process. I provided each student with a written description of the study and consent forms in Spanish and English, taking care to inform minor students that they would need signed parental/guardian permission as well as their own consent if they chose to participate.

A few students returned the signed consent form to the campus GT specialist after the initial meeting. I returned to Chase for follow-up meetings with students who had taken consent forms to ask if they were willing to participate. Some asked that I speak with their parents by telephone, after inquiring first if I spoke Spanish. Ultimately, nine[30] students agreed to participate. The students were not compensated but were given two passes to a local movie theater upon completion of the interview sequence to thank them for their participation.

The participants attended five of Chase's seven bilingual elementary feeder campuses and were served in both their bilingual and gifted education programs. Table 3.3 shows their entry and exit grades from Bilingual/ESL education services.

[30] The original group included eleven students. One student withdrew from the study before any data were collected; the other withdrew following my classroom observations but before interviews were conducted.

Table 3.3. Study Participants (pseudonyms), by Grade, with Selected Characteristics

Name	Gender	Grade in 2011-2012	Entered Bilingual Education	Exited from Bilingual Education	Identified for GT Program Services	Enrolled in GT Program Services 2011-2012
Adriana García	Female	Freshman	PreK	7th grade	2nd grade	Yes[31]
Christian Washington	Male	Freshman	Kinder	5th grade	2nd grade	Yes
Joaquín Rodríguez	Male	Freshman	Kinder	8th grade	3rd grade	Yes
Derrick Ramos	Male	Freshman	PreK	5th grade	1st grade	Yes
Naya Ramírez	Female	Freshman	PreK	5th grade	2nd grade	Yes
Edwin Solís	Male	Sophomore	Grade 3	5th grade	3rd grade	Yes
Marifer Gómez	Female	Sophomore	PreK	6th grade	2nd grade	Yes
Mía Martínez	Female	Sophomore	Kinder	6th Grade	3rd grade	No
Natalie Washington	Female	Senior	PreK	5th grade	2nd grade	No

A more detailed descriptive portrait of each participant follows in Chapter Four.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In qualitative inquiry, using multiple sources of data or triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Richards, 2005) serves to provide corroborating evidence to confirm theories and support findings as well as to locate inconsistencies. Although triangulation is frequently viewed as a method of ensuring validity of the findings, it can be used, as Merriam (1998) notes, to construct a more holistic view of the phenomenon of interest. Each data source used in this study is described below.

[31] One class only.

Individual Interviews

Interviewing began in Spring 2012, immediately following initial participant recruitment. Interviews were conducted through the summer and into the fall semester of 2012. Each student was interviewed twice. These interviews took place in the students' homes, at school, or in the local public library, and ranged in length from thirty to ninety minutes. Each interview was audiotaped, transcribed, and stored as searchable data in the software program NVivo for coding and analysis. Field notes that were taken during and after each individual interview provided additional data. These were transferred electronically into NVivo and stored for coding and analysis.

The use of an interview series is based on Seidman's "in-depth, phenomenologically based interviewing" (2006, p. 15). The main purpose of the initial interview was to gather the participant's life history with respect to the phenomenon of interest. Interview questions focused on how the student came to be bilingual, came to be identified as gifted, and the student's memories about early schooling experiences in both bilingual and gifted education (see Appendix A for interview protocol).

The second interview was designed to focus the participant's attention on the details of her/his current experiences (Seidman, 2006) as a gifted-identified, Latina/o high school student. The participants were asked to describe a typical school day and to express their opinions on the role of their language and culture in school (see Appendix A).

Additionally, each participant was asked to provide an artifact that represented them in some way during the second interview. At the beginning of that interview the students were asked to explain the significance of their artifact. Each student artifact was photographed, and the photographs were also stored as data in NVivo for coding and analysis.

Because all the study participants were not available for a single interview, two focus group interviews were held. Marifer and Adriana participated in the first focus group interview; Derrick, Edwin, Naya, Natalie, and Christian came to the second interview[32]. This final interview asked participants to focus on the meaning of the phenomenon (Seidman, 2006). As such, the questions centered on the importance of language, culture, and giftedness in their lives and their interactions with others at school (see Appendix A for interview protocol).

Classroom Observations

Each student was observed in class at least twice during the fall 2012 semester. The participants suggested the classes in which they were to be observed, and where possible I honored their requests. A total of 20 hours were spent in classroom observations. I observed students in two GT elective classes (GT Leadership [four hours] and Independent Study Mentorship [four hours]), two general education classes (English III [two hours] and Speech [two hours]) and three advanced academics classes (Algebra II PreaAP [two hours] , Spanish II PreAP [two hours] and Spanish IV PreAP[two hours]). Field notes taken during and after each classroom observation were transferred electronically into NVivo for coding and analysis. Additional data collected from the classroom observations included lesson plans, syllabi, worksheets, curriculum guides and other artifacts available on the teachers' websites. These were downloaded and stored in NVivo for coding and analysis.

Field Observations

I conducted a total of approximately six hours of field observations in the neighborhood around the high school during the summer of 2012. Similarly, I conducted field observations at Chase in the hallways, the library, the school cafeteria at lunch, the school courtyard, the front

[32] Mía was unable to attend due to health issues. Joaqín had agreed to attend but did not come.

and side parking lots before and after school and during school lunch periods, and at the school history fair during the fall semester. These observations, which altogether totaled approximately ten hours, were in addition to the classroom observations. I took field notes during and immediately following each field observation. Additionally, I photographed the Chase campus and the surrounding neighborhood. The field notes and photographs were transferred electronically for storage and subsequent coding and analysis in NVivo.

Additional Data

I also used demographic and descriptive statistical data about Chase High School, the Westcreek district, and the surrounding area collected from the school district website and publications, the Texas Education Agency, the US Census Bureau, and other databanks. Information on school and district policies with regard to issues such as attendance, dress code, student ID cards, and admission to the STEMM came from official documents on the Chase and Westcreek websites from the Student-Parent Handbook and other school and district communications. These official documents were downloaded into NVivo for storage, coding and analysis. I conducted one taped interview with the Director of Bilingual and ESL services for the Westcreek Independent School District and participated in informal conversations with other district personnel, including teachers at Chase High School and central office district personnel.

Table 3.4 below shows how the data were used to answer the research questions and how CRT/LatCrit and Figured Worlds theory guided its organization.

Table 3.4. Relationship between Data Collected and Research Questions

<table>
<tr><th>Data collected</th><th colspan="2">Research Questions</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Individual and focus group interviews

Classroom (and school field) observations</td><td colspan="2">All RQ: How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of schools?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Theoretical Foundations /Application to Theory</td></tr>
<tr><td>CRT/LatCrit
1. Privilege and foreground the perspectives of students of color (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006a; L. Fernández, 2002)
2.</td><td>Figured Worlds
1. Describe figured world of elementary and middle schools
2. Define parameters of the figured world of Chase High School</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Student Artifacts</td><td colspan="2">RQ: What role does the gifted Latina/o student’s cultural identity play in their experiences at school, if any?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Theoretical Purpose</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">CRT/LatCrit -Privilege and foreground the perspectives of students of color (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006a; L. Fernández, 2002)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Classroom (and school field) observations

Field observations</td><td colspan="2">RQ: In what ways do these students continue to use Spanish in school after it is no longer officially a language of instruction, if at all?
RQ: What contradictions or complementarities do the participants experience between their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Theoretical Purpose</td></tr>
<tr><td>CRT/LatCrit - Privilege and foreground the perspectives of students of color (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006a; L. Fernández, 2002)</td><td>Foreground the lived experiences of participants
Define parameters of the figured world of Chase High School and its neighborhood</td></tr>
</table>

Because both phenomenology as a research methodology and CRT/LatCrit as theory and analytical method privilege the experiences of participants, these data were the primary sources used to inform the research. Additional data were used as CRT recognizes that in order to make sense of complex issues, researchers must provide a richly contextualized consideration of the phenomenon being investigated (Ladson-Billings, 2003). These additional data did not speak directly to the research questions nor did they serve to privilege the participants' voices. Rather, they provided me, as a researcher, context for their narratives and, at times, clarified and corroborated statements the students made. Toward that end, the remaining data were used as follows:

Table 3.5. Relationship between Data Collected and Theoretical Lenses

Data collected	CRT/LatCrit	Figured Worlds
Census and other statistical data	Ground data contextually (Taylor, et al., 2009)	
School district policy and Texas Education Code	Ground data contextually and in an historical context (Taylor, et al., 2009) Examine how race and racism operate in law and policy (Parker & Lynn, 2002) Examine how race is viewed in school contexts (R. P. McDermott & Varene, 2006)	Define the parameters of the figured worlds of : 1. Texas public education 2. Chase High School
Newspaper articles	Ground data contextually (Taylor, et al., 2009)	Construct the figured world of Chase High School

DATA ANALYSIS

All individual and focus group interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed using the software program N-Vivo. Likewise, all field notes, classroom observation notes, analytic memos, photographs, school district documents, and classroom artifacts were stored in NVivo before the data were open coded (Merriam, 1998) for themes related to the research questions.

I began data analysis using Initial Coding (Saldaña, 2009). I printed copies of the interview transcripts and then coded by hand, line by line, using descriptive phrases. This excerpt from the transcript of my second interview with Marifé serves as an example. She is responding to questions about speaking Spanish.

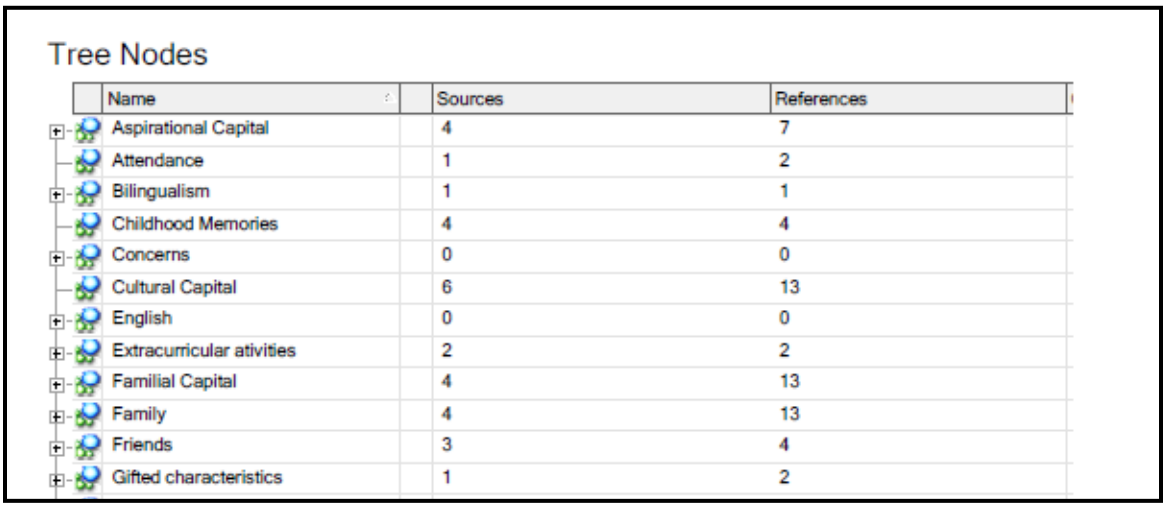
This method allowed me to reflect on the data and to remain open to the many possible theoretical directions the data might have lead. These are particularly important considerations given that phenomenology is primarily concerned with significant statements that reflect the participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 1998). I then entered these codes into NVivo as Free Nodes (Bazely, 2007).

TABLE 3.6: Example of Initial Coding of Interview Transcript

Question	Transcript	Coding
Q2.2:	Um, I do believe that the most important reason is my family, but I also believe that it will give me more opportunities? My career, maybe...or...I may get a better job just because I'm bilingual. I do want to go to college and maybe law school or just try to stick to like something else at a university, but I'm still not sure I wanna do law school. I wanna do either human development or human behavior. I would like to study that. I think I'll maybe buy a saxophone when I'm older? BUT I'm not gonna be in any group or anything I just wanna practice.	Reasons for speaking Spanish Family Opportunities, career Bilingual College/law school Human development/behavior/ psychology? Saxophone, music Pastimes
Q3.2a:	Yes, text. English and Spanish. It depends on who I'm talking to, like my best friend? She speaks to me in English. 'Cause she's barely learning Spanish. And my other friends are like the Spanish speakers; they usually talk to me in Spanish.	Texting friends Use Spanish Use English
Q5.2:	It's very important, because I can't forget where I came from, even if I moved to the United States when I was really young. I kinda got used to everything here but I still believe that it's a big part of me and it has to stay with me.	Language is important Language = culture not forgetting (1st interview)

Next, I coded participants' responses by interview question to facilitate constant comparative analysis (Hatch, 2002). I was then able to use Focused Coding (Saldaña, 2009) to find parallels in the participants' answers that could serve as potential categories. These categories were entered into NVivo as Tree Nodes (Bazely, 2007), and the participants' answers were recoded under the corresponding tree node. (See Appendix B for an example of this stage of the data analysis using Marifer's excerpt above compared to the responses of several other participants.) Categories that emerged from this Focused Coding included Attendance,

Bilingualism, Childhood Memories, Concerns, English, Extracurricular Activities, Family, Friends, Giftedness, Mexico, Skin Color, Identity, etc. The majority of these Tree Nodes, like the "Reasons for Speaking Spanish" node, were further coded to include several possible responses.



Tree Nodes

Name	Sources	References
Aspirational Capital	4	7
Attendance	1	2
Bilingualism	1	1
Childhood Memories	4	4
Concerns	0	0
Cultural Capital	6	13
English	0	0
Extracurricular ativities	2	2
Familial Capital	4	13
Family	4	13
Friends	3	4
Gifted characteristics	1	2

Figure 3.2: Example of Tree Node Categories from Focused Coding.

Finally, I used Axial Coding (Saldaña, 2009) to develop these categories into conceptual themes. Saldaña notes that Axial Coding is an appropriate analytical methodology for studies such as this one with many different forms of data (2009). Further applying Axial Coding to my analytic memos allowed me to refine and condense those categories and to generate themes to answer my research questions.

CRT/LatCrit are both theoretical lenses and analytical tools. As such, my Axial Coding was also based in part on Yosso's (2006) concept of cultural capital. Yosso examines what dominant discourses view as deficits (i.e. bilingualism, dependence on family) and reconceptualizes them as assets – capital – which support students' navigation through public school. I coded the data according to the forms of capital Yosso identifies: aspirational,

linguistic, navigational, social, familial, and resistant. In Table 3.7 I provide an example of that coding, using Marifer's excerpt from above.

Table 3.7: Example of Axial Coding of Interview Transcript.

Question	Transcript	Coding	Cultural Capital
Q2.2:	Um, I do believe that the most important reason is my family, but I also believe that it will give me more opportunities? My career, maybe...or...I may get a better job just because I'm bilingual. I do want to go to college and maybe law school or just try to stick to like something else at a university, but I'm still not sure I wanna do law school. I wanna do either human development or human behavior. I would like to study that. I think I'll maybe buy a saxophone when I'm older? BUT I'm not gonna be in any group or anything I just wanna practice.	Reasons for speaking Spanish Family Opportunities, career Bilingual College/law school Human development/behavior Saxophone, music Pastimes	Linguistic capital Familial capital Aspirational capital Navigational capital
Q3.2a:	Yes, text. English and Spanish. It depends on who I'm talking to, like my best friend? She speaks to me in English. 'Cause she's barely learning Spanish. And my other friends are like the Spanish speakers; they usually talk to me in Spanish.	Texting friends Use Spanish Use English	Linguistic capital
Q5.2:	It's very important, because I can't forget where I came from, even if I moved to the United States when I was really young. I kinda got used to everything here but I still believe that it's (language) a big part of me and it has to stay with me.	Language is important Language = culture not forgetting	Linguistic capital Social capital

Some data could be coded as more than one form of capital, as with Marifer's recognition that her primary reason for making Spanish (coded as linguistic capital) a priority in her life is her family (familial capital) while realizing that being bilingual may be useful in her future (aspirational capital). Marifer's aspirational capital was also evident in her references to future university study, including a decision whether to attend law school. Again, her understanding of

university/college study and law school as separate and successive could also be perceived as navigational capital. Marifer plays several instruments. She intends to continue pursuing her interest in music as an adult and sees herself as financially able to purchase an instrument, a saxophone in this case, of her own (aspirational capital), something she was not able to do as a high school student. She does not consider playing music to be a career goal (again, aspirational capital) nor does she wish to perform as part of a group. Because she stressed that buying a saxophone was for her personal use it is not coded as social capital. Rather, her desire to continue an activity she currently finds rewarding into her adulthood could be perceived as navigational capital. Being a musician is part of her identity; her participation in band and mariachi are ways in which she navigated the figured world of Chase High School.

Marifer speaks both Spanish and English with her friends, depending upon their language dominance. This ability to adapt her language to the situation was coded as linguistic capital. So, too, is her ability to text in her two languages: it demonstrates that she is biliterate as well as bilingual. Her determination to remain bilingual in the English-dominant United States was also coded as an example of her linguistic capital.

I coded my field and classroom observation data in a similar fashion. My decision to use cultural capital in the Axial Coding phase developed from attempting to make sense of the themes that emerged though close analysis of the data in order to answer my research questions.

In addition, I coded the other data sources such as school district and Texas Education Association public information and artifacts. This further allowed me to conceptualize my observations of the figured world of Chase High School along a continuum of experiences unique to students in advanced academic and/or gifted course offerings at one end, and the experiences of students in general education at the other end, as shown below in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: The Figured World of Chase High School

General Education	⟷		Gifted Education
Teacher delivers district curriculum	Curriculum based on district and national (i.e. Advanced Placement) standards		Students select study with teacher as guide
Teacher leads instruction	Balance of teacher and student led		Student-led (Socratic seminar)
Desks in rows	Desks in small groups	Students assigned to pairs or at tables	Students move freely as needed to complete assignments
Pen/pencil and paper assignments completed individually	Some partner work for part of period	Routines designed around partner, cooperative, and independent work	Independent student work on computers
Textbooks, worksheets	Computer labs, all students working on same assignment with options; syllabi		Independent internet or field research (at times guided by syllabi)
30+ students per classroom			As few as 10 students in a class
Materials distributed at beginning and collected at end of period	Materials readily available at all times for student use		

Here, again, CRT/LatCrit served as method and theory. Together with the Axial Coding referenced above, this analysis produced Chapter 4's composite counterstory (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006a; Yosso, 2006) of a typical day at Chase from two different perspectives: that of a student in a general education classroom[33] and that of a student in an advanced academics/gifted education classroom. Such analysis complimented the dichotomous nature of how students are figured in Texas public education – gifted v. general education, bilingual v. English dominant, at-risk v. academically successful – while providing space for the inevitable blending of the categories.

[33] Even though Mía and Adriana are gifted students, I observed them in general education classes. Mía has not taken an Advanced Academics class since her freshman year. Adriana has opted to take only one Advanced course each school year.

I reviewed these codes and major themes before aggregating them into the overall description presented in my findings in Chapter 4. This procedure is similar to that Creswell describes as typical of phenomenological studies (1998).

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

Phenomenological methods complement studies conducted within a CRT/LatCrit theoretical framework with regard to researcher positionality. In a phenomenological study, analysis often begins with the researcher detailing his or her own experience with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Phenomenology as qualitative inquiry is predicated on the researcher having an "intuitive grasp" (Merriam, 1998, p. 16) of the phenomenon, and in many cases a personal connection (Creswell, 1998) to the participants or the phenomenon. In this study, both are true.

I came to be a bilingual teacher and an advocate for gifted education out of a passion for educational equity. I completed my undergraduate studies and began my career in a school district that continues to maintain a developmental bilingual model with the goal of producing high school graduates fully literate in both Spanish and English. As a result, when I came seeking employment as a bilingual middle school teacher in South Texas, I was offered a position as a fifth grade teacher, because in the majority Latina/o city and school district where I lived and taught students were expected to abandon academics in Spanish after elementary school.

This was my introduction to the historical and political realities my students faced daily as their brown skin and Spanish tongues were treated as proxy for lack. I experienced firsthand how high-ability students who were Spanish speakers were denied entrance to gifted education and accelerated learning programs because those in charge of such programs saw deficit in their

burgeoning bilingualism. I saw the entitlement monolingual English speakers felt to English and English only, in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, school assemblies. The bilingual education community distrusts the gifted education community, and not without reason. Thus, there is inherent conflict between the two research communities I call my own.

As a mixed-race woman who identifies primarily as African-American and as a bilingual educator for 31 years, the last ten of those years in gifted education, I am rather an *outsider within* to the Chase community. Collins posits that individuals may claim the identity of an outsider within when they are in social spaces where there are unequal power relationships, where these situational identities are "attached to specific histories of social injustice" (Collins, 1999). My English fluency gives me a position of relative power in the United States, particularly since I have the ability to use a variety of English that carries linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005). While I am also an accomplished Spanish speaker, my bilingualism in some community contexts remains limited. I still make errors that mark me as a non-native speaker.

Nevertheless, my ability to speak Spanish also has marked me as ethnically ambiguous. Casimir, Mattox, Hays, and Vasquez (2000) note that the dominant narrative regards bilingualism and Blackness as mutually exclusive. I have worked for years with people who take for granted that I am Latina simply because of my association with bilingual education, my multi-racial phenotype, and, presumably, my failure to meet their expectations of African-American behavior. My identity as an African-descended bilingual woman forces me to "constantly challenge the racialization and assimilation narrative" (Casimir, et al., 2000, p. 252). In some instances, then, my bilingualism served as an entrée into some of my participants' spaces, albeit based on their own acceptance of dominant narratives.

On the other hand, while there are parallels in the experience of racism the participants and their families and I share as people of color in the United States, I understand that I have not lived their particular marginalization. I am an outsider to the long-standing Mexican-American/ Chicana/o community in San Antonio. Here, Black/Brown tensions run deep historically, and even recent immigrants have internalized dominant, deficit notions about Black people. My ethnicity tends to mark me as a perpetual outsider.

Ultimately, I know that I can be cognizant of my position only to a certain degree. Here my choice of phenomenological research methods provided additional opportunities to question assumptions my personal experiences may have led me to hold as truths. By keeping analytical memos I challenged myself to consider how "common sense" discourses about school, language, giftedness, and Latina/o students and their families inserted themselves into my data analysis and interpretation. To claim to be a critical researcher demands that I do no less.

SUMMARY

Thorne (2005) observes: "Responsible theorizing through politically strategic essentialization involves denaturalizing representation of data and category formation and affirming that research participants are *agents with personal and collective histories that matter*" (p. 398., emphasis added). In this regard, asking participants to address possible paradoxes of privilege and deficit lends this study a critical orientation (Merriam, 1998) in that it raises questions of oppression in education policy and practice. Choosing a phenomenological methodology helped me to foreground and bracket (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994) my bias as a critical researcher. and to provide a "deliberate and purposeful" (Groenewald, 2004) distance between the data and my own biases. This approach encouraged systematic reflection on the data (Shi, 2011) and allowed patterns and meaning to emerge from experiences of the

participants (Creswell, 2003) rather than from my own preconceptions. Coupled with the deep description qualitative analyses are capable of eliciting, we gain access to the figured world of Chase High School through the voices of Latina/o participants, and insight into "schooling" at as it is conducted in spaces where they are the numerical majority but where their linguistic and cultural identities position them as "at-risk."

Chapter Four: Findings. *Participants and their Figured World(s)*

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three outlined the methodology and data collection procedures I used in this investigation. In this chapter I present findings gleaned from analyses of the collected data to answer the primary research question: How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of schools? In Chapter Three I also provided an overview of the research site and participants. I begin Chapter Four with more detailed, thick description (Clifford, 1990) of the Chase neighborhood to contextualize the students' cultural and linguistic lived experiences.

Next, I introduce each of the focal students through individual, biographical portraits. The following section provides background information on Chase High School before moving into a description of the school today. I frame the "figured world" of Chase High School referenced in my central research question using a methodology that resembles composite Critical Race counterstorytelling (Yosso, 2006).

One staff member remarked that Chase has become, over the years, like two schools. This section examines the ways in which the school (and district) structure available identities (1) to all its students and (2) to the focal students in particular by comparing the daily experiences of students in Chase's general education program with those of students in Advanced Academics, of which the gifted education program is a part, based on my field and classroom observations, documents from the district, school, and teachers, and comments gleaned from participant interviews.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Chase attendance area is bordered by one interstate highway and two state highways. Its southern edge abuts a US Air Force Base, which is home to one of the largest military hospital complexes and training facilities in the country. When a plane flies low overhead on its way to or from the base, people who are engaged in conversation stop and wait until the noise of the jet engines subsides. Afterward, they pick up the conversation where it left off. In the schools near the base, teachers stop instruction and students pause in the midst of speaking as the jets roar through the sky. This problem is particularly acute for one of the elementary schools attended by study participants, because it is directly across the street from the base. Those several seconds while the jet engines blast overhead are treated as though they did not exist. In this environment, outsiders and newcomers are easily identifiable because when a plane passes they raise their voices and try to continue the conversation. They are unaccustomed to this collective time warp. Yet they, too, eventually adapt, and after a while it becomes habit.

The area around Chase High School is economically depressed, although its main thoroughfares are crowded with businesses. Car repair, muffler and brake shops, payday loan, pawn shops and adult daycare centers dominate the landscape. Near the campus, the iconic architecture of fast-food outlets – McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Dominos, Little Caesar's and Dairy Queen, iHOP – contrasts with the bright orange, red, and yellow facades of small, locally-owned and operated barbecue, Mexican and Chinese restaurants[34]. There are a few motels, mostly along the interstates, but there is one on the corner near a study participant's house, a block away from the military base, and another, called El Alcazar, within sight of the Chase campus itself. The area's three grocery stores – two of them part of a ubiquitous South Texas chain, and one, called

[34] The 2007 Economic Census reports 108 businesses providing accommodations and food service in the area (*2007 Economic Census*, 2007).

Festival, geared toward the tastes of Mexican and Mexican-American families – anchor strip malls at major intersections. Family-owned, mom-and-pop businesses – a piñata shop, barber shops, nail and beauty salons, dry cleaners – dot the corners of smaller side streets, away from the strip centers. Throughout the neighborhood, cluttering the view, are numerous billboards in English and Spanish, some marked with graffiti. They advertise cars, cigarettes, fast food, medical care, and tax refund loans. Medical and dental clinics announce on their marquees that they accept CHIP, the Texas public health insurance program for children[35], and the day care centers signs advertise that they accept CCDS, the county childcare subsidy.

The 2007 Economic Census identified 101 retail establishments in the zip code area around Chase High School (*2007 Economic Census,* 2007). Empty storefronts reclaimed as canvases by graffiti artists are at times right next door to open businesses. In contrast to the concrete and glass sleekness of suburban strip centers in other parts of the Westcreek District, commercial property in the Chase neighborhood is jumbled together haphazardly, seemingly without regard to zoning.

The neighborhood is also home to many churches. Along the frontage road of the interstate highway there are four large churches – one Catholic, one Christian, one Lutheran, and one United Methodist – in a stretch that is less than one-third of a mile. Not far away are a Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall, a Church of Christ, and several smaller Baptist churches. The attendance area also includes a second large Catholic church, its outside walls painted orange, purple and teal.

There are a few gathering spots in the area for youth. The community center between the brightly colored Catholic church and the public library has an outdoor, lighted basketball court,

[35] The 2007 Economic Census identified 55 health care and social assistance establishments in the zip code area (*2007 Economic Census*, 2007).

and the city pool is open in the summer. There is a roller skating rink, and of course the fast food outlets, but apart from one student, Mía, who mentions stopping for breakfast at the restaurants on the way to school, the participants in this study do not report spending their free time outside of school at any of these places. Rather, they mention the church activities that they are involved in, or the time they spend time at their own or at friends' houses, or travel and shopping activities outside the Chase neighborhood.

Although there are a few apartment complexes and trailer parks, most of the zip code's 14,600 households (Localistica, 2012) live in small, single-family homes in various stages of repair, and in fact, all of the participants in this study live in detached, single-family houses. According to US Census figures, 58.8% of the homes are owner occupied, while 41.2% are rental units (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Data reported in the 2010 Census show that Chase High School, and the elementary and middle schools attended by the participants, are located in the 25th lowest-income zip code in the city, with a median household income of $30,200 (Localistica, 2012).

There is great income disparity in the Westcreek District. For example, the neighborhood surrounding Chase High School is much poorer than the neighborhood around McLean High School, which has the fewest number of economically disadvantaged students. McLean is in the 10th wealthiest zip code in the area (Hernandez, 2011), where the median income is between $82, 537 and $97,266.

In the following section I present descriptive portraits of the nine participants in this dissertation study. Each of the students fit the characteristics I established for participation:

- 14 – 19 years of age
- identified as gifted while enrolled in a bilingual education program
- exited from bilingual education in grades three, four or five (i.e. late-exit bilingual)

- live in the Chase neighborhood feeder pattern, whether attending Chase or the STEMM

One of the study's findings was that the students chose different high school career paths despite very similar elementary gifted education experiences and despite being enrolled in the same high school. Only one student – Marifer –enrolled in STEMM, although almost all the other students also chose to be in the Advanced Academics program. All the courses that Christian, Derrick, Edwin, Joaquín, and Naya selected followed a GT, PreAP, or AP curriculum. Adriana decided to take only one Advanced Academic course per year. The other classes in her schedule followed the general education curriculum. Mía and Natalie were enrolled exclusively in general education classes, although both students had taken Advanced Academic courses in the past. Derrick, Edwin, Marifer, Naya, and Natalie have all chosen to take elective courses specifically designed for GT students in addition to the PreAP, AP and (in the case of Marifer) STEMM courses that are considered to part of Westcreek's high school GT Services (see Table 3.2).

The portraits are constructed from initial, follow-up, and focus group interviews I conducted between May 2012 and April 2013. I offered the participants the option of being interviewed at their homes or in a public location (i.e. public library or on campus). Adriana, Christian, Joaquín, Marifer, Mía, and Natalie opted to be interviewed at home. As a result, their portraits offer more detailed descriptions of their surroundings than I was able to provide for Derrick and Naya, who were interviewed on campus at Chase, and Edwin, whom I interviewed at the local public library. Both focus group interviews were held in public places.

THE PARTICIPANTS: DESCRIPTIVE PORTRAITS

Adriana García

Adriana was a freshman at the beginning of the study. She was the only student who answered, without hesitation, that she wanted to do her interview in Spanish. Over the summer she turned fifteen and celebrated her quinceañera at one of the two Catholic churches in the area. She commented that the quinceañera, while tiring due to all the preparations, made her very happy. Having a day dedicated to her, she said, made her feel special and more grown up.

US-born, she is the oldest of three siblings and the only girl. Her brothers are too young to go to school, although the middle brother turns five over the summer, and her mother has chosen to put him in a Dual Language, rather than a transitional, bilingual kindergarten program. Adriana is often responsible for their care; that limits what she can do after school, but she does play clarinet in Chase's school band. Both her parents were born in Mexico. Her mother commented to me at our first meeting that it is important for "Hispanos" to help one another, given that the population is growing. She is interested in this dissertation project because she is interested in increasing the number of Latina/o students in gifted education programs.

The single-family house is small, neat, and on a block of recently built homes which stand in contrast with the others in the neighborhood that are, on the average, over 40 years old. I conducted both my interviews with her at the kitchen table, a large, rustic-design set in front of the sliding glass door leading outside to the back yard. When I came in, Adriana's mother quickly switched off the television in the corner and, after introducing me to the younger boys, took them into a bedroom to give us some privacy. During our second interview, the older of her two brothers worked quietly on the computer for the duration of our conversation. Adriana chose her best friend's name as her pseudonym. She did not choose an artifact.

Adriana dresses casually, in pants and tee-shirts, and at our first interview her long, dark wet hair made it clear she had just showered. She wore small hoop earrings and no other jewelry. She is slim and rather small in height for her age. She is also enrolled in summer school, having failed both the Biology and English Language Arts Writing portions of the required End-of-Course state assessments. She is visibly a bit embarrassed at having to repeat the coursework over the summer to pass the exams, and is uncomfortable talking about it, although she says she feels confident she will pass when she takes them a second time. Eventually, she does pass both assessments.

The first time I visit her Speech class, Adriana does not make eye contact with me or acknowledge me in any way until after the class is dismissed. Then she comes over, gives me a quick abrazo, and, addressing me in Spanish, asks how I am doing. I tell her it is good to see her, ask about her family, and she hugs me again before scurrying off to her next class.

Christian Washington

Like Adriana, Christian competed his freshman year in 2011-2012.

He is the only boy in a family of three girls – two older, one younger. The older sister closest to him in age, Natalie, is also a participant in this study. Their father is African-American and their mother, Mexican-American. Christian has never lived with his father, and his parents are divorced. Instead, the oldest three, who are all phenotypically more African-American than Latina/o, have all lived with their maternal grandparents, whom they call Mami and Papi. (The oldest sister is now in college and lives in the dorms during the school year. She joined our second interview as she was at home for the summer.) Christian has lived in San Antonio his entire life. His younger sister lives with their mother in Alabama, although they are both visiting the first time I come to the house for an interview.

The house, like many on the street, is surrounded by a waist high chain-link fence. It is one of the sturdier and better kept houses on the block. Flowers and trees fill the front yard. The driveway is closed to the street by a wrought iron gate decorated with painted flowers and butterflies, which I later learn was welded by Christian's grandfather. There are several vehicles parked in the side yard.

Inside, the house is long and the shades and drapes are drawn, making it dark and cool even though the sun shines fiercely outdoors. Dark wood flooring adds to this effect. The rooms in the rear appear to have been added on over the years.

We sit at the rustic kitchen table for both interviews. The kitchen opens directly into the living room, where there are two sofas, several comfortable-looking chairs, a large TV and a computer. Two large, professional portraits of Natalie and their older sister in their quinceañera dresses hang on the wall over one of the sofas. Christian's biological mother turns off the TV during the first interview and reads a magazine. His younger sister plays a game on the computer. His mother is less friendly toward me than his grandfather, whom I met on an earlier (failed) attempt to interview the students.

Following our interview, Christian takes me into the backyard to "saludar a mi Papi [say hello to my dad]." We pass a box of puppies in the living room that I had not noticed before. Out in the yard, too, there are several dogs of various colors and sizes.

Mr. Garza smiles and shakes my hand. He is working on a barbeque grill of his own design, which he explains to me in detail. Christian helps him make the grills ("Cuando no está flojo" [when he's not being lazy] Mr. Garza comments), and while his grandfather and I chat he fetches a small photo album of pictures of the various styles and sizes of grills his grandfather makes, and one of his business cards. Christian's pride in Mr. Garza's work is evident. There are

many tools spread around the yard, which also has a table, piles of scrap metal in many different shapes and sizes, a large wooden and metal coach, painted white, and an outbuilding big enough to be both a garage and a second living space. On the wall of this building is a life-size cut-out of Emiliano Zapata. “He’s my hero – es mi héroe,” Mr. Garza explains. “We come from the same rumbo.” Christian later tells me that his Papi is from a town near Toluca. He says his Papi has a “sombrero así de grande” [hat this big], indicating its size with his hands, like the one Zapata is wearing in the portrait. “When he’s wearing that he looks just like him, right, Papi?”

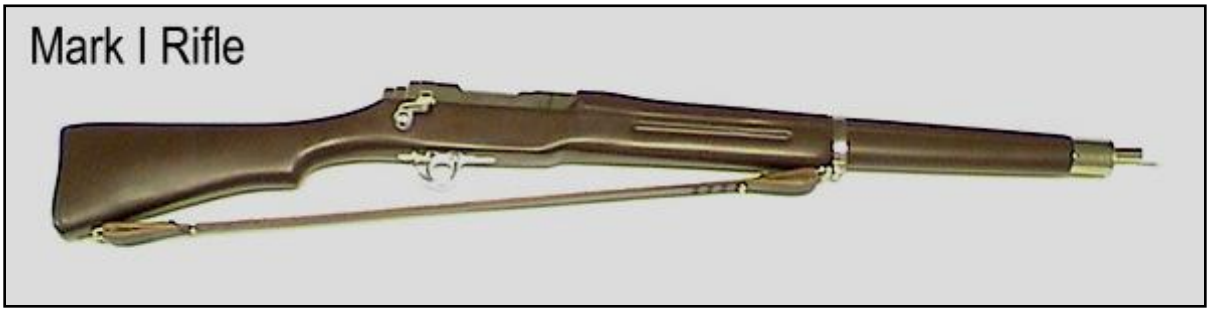


Figure 4.1: Christian’s Artifact. Photograph of a Mark 1 ROTC Rifle. Source: Peacock’s Marching World. http://www.marchingworld.com/pg230a.htm

As Christian walks me to the street and my car – “Show her the gates, m’ijo!” Mr. Garza says as I am leaving – he asks me, “Did you see that carriage back there?” When I answer yes, he elaborates. “My grandpa made it for my sisters’ quinceañera.” I asked if his younger sister, who is only 12, would use it, too. Christian answers. “Probably not. She’s not used to living in a Mexican household.”

Christian told me his pseudonym was one name his parents considered for him when he was born. Like his given name, it can be pronounced in either English or Spanish. His chose his artifact, a rifle like that used in his drill team competitions for ROTC, because, “I feel good when… I have it on me. I don't know 'cause not that many people can like, spin it? So when you're doing all this cool stuff, people, they're like... ‘Wow.’"

Christian drills four days a week with his team after school on the concrete surface beside the ROTC building. He can't afford to buy a rifle yet, nor does he have the practice shoes required for drill team, although he answers "Yes" when asked if he is in uniform at practice. He is indeed agile with the rifle. He is always in step, and only missed one turn, but followed another command immediately that all the others in the team missed, after which he sneaked a quick smile.

Student leaders monitor and supervise other students during drill team practice while the instructors watch. They quiz the students on the names of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, the dimensions and weight of their rifles, what wars specific weapons were used in. No one breaks discipline during these practices. Students who, like Christian, can be inattentive, playful and off-task in the classroom obey the commands of their student supervisors without hesitation. Their posture is erect and rigid, their gaze directed straight ahead, and their rifles are placed at a precise spot next to their feet. This Christian does not resemble the student I have chatted with casually around school, interviewed in his home, and observed in class. That Christian is always talking, always in motion, to the extent that it was halfway through the period when Christian noticed me the first time I observed his Algebra II class. As we made eye contact he caught his breath – then nodded his head once in greeting and smiled.

Christian knows that he was considered a troublemaker in school in prior years. "I guess I was just a jerk to - to some of my teachers," he said. "Just making, like, too many jokes. To be funny, I guess. (It's) Not really (a talent); I'm not that good."

Christian also has a deeply sensitive, religious side. He recalled being at a summer retreat with his church: "It brought you closer to God, you know? ...'cause you know like in church sometimes you're ashamed to worship when you're a kid?"

When I asked if there were issues in the world that bothered him, his answer revealed compassion: "Those commercials for the people that like, who are less fortunate? They make me sad. Or like the dog commercials, like the abused...abusive ones? Those are pretty sad."

It is not surprising that Christian chose his drill team rifle as his artifact. Although he hopes to attend the University of Texas or Texas A&M after high school, he also plans to join the Marines. He isn't really sure what he will study – he thinks maybe welding – but he knows he wants to have a career where he doesn't have to work outside. Still, the path to college and the military are unclear to him. "Can I ask you something?" Christian said to me as he walked me to my car after our second interview. He stopped walking, looked at the ground, and then squinted up at me. "What do I need to do to make sure I go to college? I don't want to end up like Natalie."

Natalie Washington

Like her brother Christian, Natalie phenotypically appears African-American. She is rather short, thin, and small-boned. Her dark, shiny curly hair is cropped short on top and just grazes the tops of her shoulders. There is a guardedness about her personality that could be read as aloofness, or indifference, or toughness. She looks me straight in the eye when she answers my direct questions, but when we meet with her two siblings, she looks away or at the kitchen table when she responds to their banter.

Natalie pointedly told me, twice, that she does not remember elementary school. This statement was rather more decision than a declaration of fact. When probed, in fact, or prompted by the recollections of her siblings, she did comment on isolated events and specific situations, but did not reminisce about her elementary schooling in general statements, as the other participants did.

Nonetheless, she is an astute judge of people. Several times, particularly when talking about her former teachers, Natalie's observations, though often subtle, captured their personalities in a few choice words. An example is her comment on the elementary teacher she and her brother shared. Natalie drew a breath, tilted her head to the side, and as though addressing the table commented, "She's an odd one." She then looked directly up at me, her chin pointed forward, to see if I caught what she was saying – and laughed when she saw my smile.

Natalie was the only senior among the group in 2011-2012, and she graduated in June with her class. However, as of midsummer she had made no plans to attend college in the fall and only half-heartedly contested her siblings' derision about her failure to complete the needed paperwork. "You promised to help me," she whined to her sister. Yet she was mute when both siblings characterized her as a late bloomer.

This Natalie bears little resemblance to the high school freshman who took the GT Leadership class and helped establish Chase's first competitive financial literacy team. She worked hard to earn one of the six spots on the team, and after doing so and without the knowledge of her teacher, organized her fellow teammates to appear at the competition dressed in their blue and silver school colors. Her teacher recalled how determined she was to get on the team, because she was certain it meant she would be able to get a new dress. Today on the wall in the GT classroom there are two pictures of Natalie, the other girl, and the four boys who made the team, standing proudly with their third place trophy. "Yeah, I worked hard my freshman, sophomore and junior years," she recalls. She also worked hard in middle school. She took the Spanish IV Advanced Placement test as an eighth grader and scored a 4 out of a possible five points.

Although Natalie was more concerned with being on time for her new job at McDonalds at the time of our first interview, by fall she had enrolled in a technical college and was excited about becoming a phlebotomist when we spoke again the following spring. She chose a syringe as her artifact. "I never even practiced on the practice arm," she said proudly. She believes she has discovered her real talent in the medical field.

Figure 4.2: Natalie's Artifact. Photograph of a Phlebotomy Syringe. Source: http://www.ehow.com/list_6500959_indiana-phlebotomy-certification-programs.html

Joaquín Rodríguez

Joaquín was also a freshman in the 2011-2012 school year. He is the oldest of three siblings, with one younger brother in middle school, who is also identified as gifted, and a sister who has just entered kindergarten. His family lives in a small corner house with a shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the middle of the front yard. There is no grass, but the dirt has been raked and gravel paths lead from the sidewalk around the shrine to the front door. A wooden fence on the side of the house bears the same colorful graffiti as another fence further down the street. There are three cars in the driveway. Next to the front door are containers with flowers – some real, some made from painted tin snipped from cans.

Inside, the house is dark and quiet with gleaming, spotless tile floors. We sit together on a small sofa in the tiny living room; Joaquín's parents and his little sister sit very close to us on another love seat on our left during our first interview. Mr. and Mrs. Rodríguez say little through the interview; they are polite but somewhat distant. Joaquín's little sister is completely silent. Both sofas face a large TV that was tuned to a program in Spanish when I came in. Mrs. Rodríguez turned it off when, in Spanish, she invited me to sit down.

Joaquín wears a polo shirt and khaki pants. He is of average height for his age. His mestizo heritage is evident – he has a rather light complexion, but his facial construction and features are very *indio*. His glossy, thick dark brown hair is swept in a wave above his forehead and is kept trimmed but not short. He has rather small eyes that almost disappear when he smiles – which he does frequently.

Joaquín and I meet alone in the living during the second interview. I come by one day after school. Mr. Rodríguez greets me at the door and hurries into another part of the house. Mrs. Rodríguez comes out of the kitchen to offer her greetings before returning to her cooking. Although we spoke Spanish in his first interview, Joaquín chooses English for the second interview. He is soft-spoken and reflective, and considers each of my questions for a while before answering. Joaquín is quiet at school, too. Although he chats casually with a few other students, I have observed that he is on task and serious when there is work to be done. The first time I observe the Algebra II Pre-AP class he doesn't notice me right away because I am sitting at the back of the room. When he does see me, he offers me the same shy but joyous smile he greets me with in his home.

I wonder if the smell from the kitchen is making Joaquín hungry. He has told me that the first thing he usually does when he gets home from school is eat something, and I don't know if

today he has had time to do so. The family's shared cell phone is on the coffee table in front of the sofa where we sit; it rings once during the interview and Mr. Rodríguez comes in to take it from Joaquín, who has answered it.

It is December 2012, and the house is decorated for the upcoming Christmas holiday. A small, lighted artificial tree stands on a table near the front window. The what-not shelves hold not only the same figuras and decorative items I noticed on my first visit but are also draped with garlands. Strings of Christmas lights hang around the room. I remark that the room looks nice. Joaquín replies, "The tree took us a while. We all like to decorate a lot, the house, with everything we have. Even if we have just a few small things we'll try to make it look really nice."

Joaquín was born in Amarillo, Texas, and his family moved to their current home when he was a toddler. There is no other family in town; the closest members are those they left behind in Amarillo, and his grandmother lives in Mexico. He is hoping that she can join them at their house for Christmas – he sighs when he thinks about how long it has been since he went to Mexico to see her. "It's been a while," he says. "I think a couple of years."

Joaquín selected his family's baptismal gift, a gold crucifix which he described as a little necklace, as his artifact. Both he and his brother were baptized in Amarillo; his little sister has not yet had her baptism. "They just told me that they saw it and they thought it was really it was really nice, and they thought it fit me." He keeps the cross in his bedroom, hanging over his bed. He says he thinks his brother received a similar gift for his baptism and speculates that his parents must have it somewhere because he has never seen it.

Figure 4.3: Joaquín's Artifact: His baptismal crucifix.

He is proud to have taken all Pre-AP classes in his first year of high school, although he admits he could have worked and studied harder. That ambition weighs heavily on him lately as he has concentrated a lot on his future. Although in his first interview he glibly answered that he wanted to attend an Ivy League school – "A lo mejor ir a Princeton, Harvard, he leído mucho sobre ellas" (Maybe go to Princeton, Harvard, I've read a lot about them) – and study law, his volunteer work campaigning over the summer and fall of 2012 with the local Democratic Party has helped him focus his goals. Now he says he is "pretty sure" he wants to study political science in college, with his ultimate goal being a career in politics. He says, "I want to be remembered before, before I pass on?" Although this interest was sparked by his participation in electoral politics, Joaquín would prefer to join the diplomatic services. His dream is to work for the UN as an ambassador for the US. "So I've been starting to work a little harder in my classes. Because I was sitting in class and I noticed – time was going by really quickly so I was like, 'Uhhh – I guess it's time to get everything together...' "

I selected Joaquín's pseudonym for him as he could not decide what he wanted to be called. It bears similarity to his given name.

Mía Martínez

Mía was a sophomore in 2011-2012. She is tall and thin, with almost waist length dark straight hair. She plays with her diagonally cut bangs, sweeping them out of her eyes while we talk. She is barefoot when she comes to the door and dressed casually in jeans and a t-shirt. Her mother greets me with an abrazo and welcomes me with "Está en su casa." This phrase could be translated into English as "Make yourself at home", but that translation does not convey the depth of confianza of the Spanish – which is more an invitation to feel as though you are one of the family. We have never met before.

Mía's front yard is well-tended and separated from the other houses on her block by a chain-link fence. It can arguably be described at the nicest house on the block. A small palmera bordered by white rocks in the middle of the front yard leans toward the driveway. The front door, behind a wrought-iron security door, opens onto a formal dining area, set with dishes and cloth napkins. Next to the door is a keypad for a security system. The living room, dining room and kitchen form one open, smoothly-continuous space. Although the blinds are drawn, soft sunlight filters in through the kitchen windows.

Mía explains that this is not the family's original house on this site. The other house burned to the ground on Halloween when she was in third grade. She confesses that she didn't like this house at first, that it was too big, too open, and lacked the intimate feel of the smaller, original home. Her father and his friends did the majority of the reconstruction work while the family lived in a nearby apartment complex. It took them eight months to complete. I note the sloping, vaulted ceiling and the crown molding of the dining and living rooms. This is expert work.

We sit at the dining room table. In one corner there is an altar with a three foot painted statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe ("My mother is kinda holy"), an open Bible on a wooden stand, lit candles, fresh flowers, and portraits of family members who have passed away. When I ask, Mía picks up each picture frame and tells me about the person and the circumstances of their death. From the table I can see that there are several other images of the Virgen around the house, and a print of the "The Last Supper" occupies much of the wall across from where I sit at the table. Large portraits of the three children as babies hang over the sofa, and smaller framed pictures of other family members decorate the side tables.

Mía was born in México and moved to the US when she was five years old. She is the middle child of three. Her older sister has graduated from Chase, and although she is married, lives with her husband temporarily in the family home. Mía explains that in the summer she babysits her little brother, who is in the GT program at the elementary school all three children attended. She gives me a knowing look when she explains that he is still sleeping, even though it is after 10:00 in the morning.

Although we began our first interview in Spanish, Mía soon switched to English. This pattern repeated itself in our subsequent meetings. She laughs frequently, using her hands in an animated way as she talks. Her answers are long and elaborated.

The house has a warm, calm feel – the cool tile flooring, flickering candles, the pale greens and tans of the living room furniture and floral paintings enhance its peaceful, serene, loving, protective ambiance.

Mía's artifact is her charm bracelet. She has had it since the first day of third grade, when her mother presented it to her with her first charm, a tiny backpack. "I was scared because of

TAKS[36] and EVERYthing...it was like my first time testing and I was just so scared of that grade." She tells me why each individual charm is meaningful: a dolphin from Sea World represents her love of animals, the butterfly her sister gave her for her birthday, the catcher's mitt that recalls the summer she spent playing Little League while staying with an aunt in Houston, the frog because when she was little "when it would rain I would like going outside and catching toads. It was so disgusting! But me and my neighbor, we always used to like, we would go to her backyard, and I don't know why it was always so muddy there, like it didn't have grass, so we would catch 'em and we'd like throw them at each other, like the frogs were always so scared of us." I noticed during one of my classroom observations that Mía was wearing the bracelet.

Figure 4.4: Mía's Artifact: Her Charm Bracelet.

Mía answered most of my interview questions with elaborated, animated responses like her detailed description of childhood rainy days above. It surprised me, then, that she did not

[36] TAKS: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the NCLB required statewide assessment at the time. Elementary (3-5), middle school, and students who started high school in the 2001-2012 school year now take the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, or STAAR.

acknowledge me at all when I saw her on campus. The first time was by chance, when I was writing field observation notes in my car during one of the student lunch periods. As she was returning to school with a group of friends, she passed my car and made eye contact with me. Visibly startled, she quickly looked away and moved closer to the street, putting her friends between us. During her classroom observations she did not acknowledge me at all. She raced out the door at the end of the period before I had a chance to intercept her.

Marifer Gómez

Marifer's house is in the middle of a block of single family homes. Like Mía's and Christian's, it is separated from the neighbors' homes by a fence, but in this case it is a wooden, privacy fence. Marifer greets me alone – she is an only child who lives with her working mother. The house is cool and dark, with dark wood floors. We sit in the tiny living room. There is a window air conditioning unit, a small sofa and a single easy chair with a coffee table between them. The sofa faces a tall, open shelf with a TV and several framed family pictures. From the sofa you can see the linoleum floor in the kitchen and a corner of a table with two wooden chairs. Next to the single window is a full-size organ that Marifer is learning to play. She also plays alto and tenor sax, violin, vihuela, sings, and is in the school Mariachi group.

Marifer is rather short and fine boned. Her bangs are cut straight and long, falling just below her eyebrows. She wears her long, dark straight hair swept up into a ponytail. Her round, dark face has very Indian features. The first time we met, she was wearing jeans and a t-shirt. The second time she wore a flowered dress with a crocheted vest, jewelry, and sandals. Her fingernails were alternately painted with soccer balls and tiny reproductions of the Mexican flag. When I ask about them, she tells me that one afternoon she was bored and looking at fingernail designs on the Internet. She saw one design with a Colombian flag, "…but I thought, why not

Mexican?" She tells me that she painted them herself, but wondered if the eagle was clear enough.

Marifer was born in Monterrey, Mexico and came to the US with her mother when she was four. Her father is also a musician in Mexico, a singer, but since her parents separated and divorced she does not have contact with him. Her mother was born in the US of Mexican-national parents and "went back" to Mexico to stay when she was 18. Marifer visited Mexico frequently when she was younger, but comments that her family hasn't let her visit in almost five years because they say it is too dangerous to go. She offers me a glass of water as we sit down.

Marifer's demeanor alternates rapidly between calm and animated. She is passionate about music. She chooses her borrowed vihuela for her artifact. It is the instrument she plays in the mariachi band. She hopes someday to have one like it, from Morelos, because, she explained, they make the best stringed instruments there.

She is equally passionate about psychology and plans to study it in college. Her Independent Study Mentorship program project investigated the correlation between introverted and extroverted students and their reaction to negative evaluation.

Figure 4.5: Marifer's Artifact: Her vihuela.

Marifer is the only study participant who attends the STEMM. At the time of our summer interviews, she was concerned that she was registered for all Advanced Placement classes in the fall, and was trying to decide which one she should take at the Pre-Advanced Placement level so as not to out too much stress on herself. It may be her Calculus class. While she is good at math, she suspects that she might have a math disability:

> I get numbers switched around? And my mom has the same problem, too, so I think it's...it's not too strong, but it is a little bit because...Like I'll put one answer down - it'll be like 140 and I'll put 104 - and I'm like, "Why am I not getting it right?" And then I realize. Like, somebody has to point it out to me, like, "You put 104," then I get it.

She has self-diagnosed:

> Dyscalculia? No, I had to...I read about it because my mom has it, too, and she says that her letters switch around. I don't have that problem, but she told me that her letters switch, and that that was dyslexia, but I looked it up for numbers. I was like, "Maybe it's something else," and then I read about it and it said that. It's just a little bit, though, so it's really...not that...it doesn't really affect me much. When I see them, writing them down, or when I'm thinking about them, I switch 'em. It's just sometimes. I'll switch the number, I'll read the number wrong, I'll write it down, I'll do ALL the problem wrong and then I'll realize it, after 30 minutes have passed. But I fix it.

In the end, she decided not to take AP-Physics, a decision Marifer now regrets. She worries that her teacher is not sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject and that she will be inadequately prepared for higher level science courses as a result.

At the end of our first interview we walk out of the house together. Marifer has agreed to water the next-door neighbors' plants and grass while they are out of town. A long, paved walkway leads from her front door to the street where I am parked. Across the street, an older white male is bent over looking at something on his own lawn. When he sees us, he stops what he is doing, stands up and watches, his attention especially on Marifer. She notices me noticing him and remarks, "He's always watching. Nosy." We say goodbye. When I reach my car, the older man is still watching, not smiling. When I say hello to him, he doesn't answer. Later

Marifer explains that the man and his wife watch out for her because they know she is often home alone when her mother is at work. Recently, her mother got a new job at a local community college that gives her the same school holidays as Marifer, so she is happy that they see each other more.

Edwin Solís

Like Marifer, Edwin was born in Monterrey. He is the most recently arrived of the Mexican-born participants, having come to the United States just before he started third grade. Of all the participants, he decisively declared that he wanted to conduct the interview in English, noting that his parents sent him to an "English school" in Mexico before they moved to the US so he could learn English. Edwin is tall, light-complected, and has short, wavy dark hair. His medium build is incongruous with his position as a running back on Chase's Junior Varsity football team. He also plays soccer.

Edwin is very nervous when we first start. His answers are hesitant, and his hands tremble. Soon, however, he leans back in his chair, smiles, and relaxes. He is the oldest of three boys, and can't remember where his brothers go to school or if they are in the GT program.

Of all the participants, Edwin is the only one who chose to meet me at the neighborhood library. His mother greets me warmly in Spanish and indicates that she will browse around while we talk. She is soft-spoken, very polite, and well-dressed. At the end of the interview, she gives me an abrazo.

This fall Edwin has logged more community service hours than most students for National Honor Society, but he has missed two of the three NHS meetings. He was on the A Honor Roll after the first grading period and continued on the football team.

He chose a football as his artifact. “When you have the ball, you have a job to do,” he explained. “You have a responsibility. You have to do it on your own.”

Figure 4.6: Edwin’s Artifact: A football.

Derrick Ramos

Derrick likes to be the first to arrive for his first period GT class. He is standing at the door, with his books tucked under one arm and a huge disposable plastic drink cup in his free hand, before his teacher arrives to unlock it. He charges in, claims a seat at the nearest of two long conference tables, and leans way back in the swivel chair. “Did you stop at the gas station?” a classmate, a longtime friend from elementary school, asks him. He nods and grins, revealing that the blue iced drink he is sipping has stained his teeth and tongue.

Derrick is the youngest of four, and all his older siblings are girls. They have all graduated from Chase. He is of average height for his age and wiry, and seems to be constantly in motion – if not his whole body, then at the very least, his eyes. They are large and dark brown. His skin in medium brown and he wears his black hair cropped pelos parados, although it is so

thick he does not need gel to produce the effect. There is the suggestion of a mustache on his upper lip.

His speech is as quick as his motions – he answers my questions rapidly, interjects comments into conversations around him (our interviews took place in the GT classroom) and zooms back to finish the topic at hand. I wondered if sometimes Derrick's divided attention, particularly during our second interview, caused him to answer too quickly before giving a considered response. Nonetheless, he persisted with his original answers when I redirected his attention. I was left feeling that he was not entirely genuine, and that he would have said some things differently but needed to follow his original train of thought to save face.

Derrick selected a symbol, a silhouette of a running person, as his artifact. "My teachers say I'm gifted in everything - sports, subjects," he explains. He plays on several school teams – football, basketball, track, soccer, softball – and also participates in sports outside of school. He relates that his middle school coaches didn't give him a choice about participating in athletics in high school – they had contacted the coaches and signed him up while he was still in eighth grade. He spends each afternoon working out in the school gym.

Figure 4.7: Derrick's artifact: The silhouette of a running person (his explanation).

Apparently his teachers were not wrong about Derrick being gifted in "subjects" as well. He was identified as gifted when he was in first grade, younger than all the other participants.

He offered no explanation as to his selection of "Derrick" as his pseudonym. The spelling was also his choice, and it bears phonological resemblance to his given name – except that name is Spanish.

Naya López

Naya describes herself as the overachiever in her family. She is the second oldest of six, all girls except for the youngest, a brother. One older sister also attends Chase, another is in middle school, and the youngest attend the same elementary school she did. While most of her siblings have also been in the GT program, she feels she pushes herself more. "Jessica (her sister) was always like, 'I'll just settle for average', but I was always like, 'No, I gotta get As, As, As, As." She pounds her fist into her hand for emphasis.

Naya is also a feminist. "I hate - sexist people?"

> Well, I don't know how to say it...people are always saying, like, I belong in the kitchen, and I hate how people, oh, girls, they say that for every dollar a man earns, a woman earns 70 cents or something? And I was looking - I've been studying history, and it hurts - it sucks to see women are still treated the way they used to be treated. I dunno, it just - BOTHERS me. My gender shouldn't affect my life.

Christian, who has known her since middle school and is in the same Algebra II class with her and Joaquín, remarked, "She is TOO smart." Having had classes together since they were in sixth grade has created an odd friendship between them. When they met together during the focus group interview they tried to explain it. Although it is more a friendship of circumstance – Naya and Christian are not the type of friends who would call one another to see a movie on the weekend, or who would sit together in the cafeteria at lunch time – they have a loyal bond. They have one another's back. Their exchanges are more like those of siblings – they both fondly, teasingly remember incidents they have both lived through in their years of school together. Naya shrugged: "He just kept showing up in my classes, so…"

Naya chose her pseudonym to honor her idol, the television actress Naya Rivera. Acting is a particular passion for this Naya, too. She is in the Drama Club and had a role in the fall production. Books and reading are another passion. She is in the school Book Club and says the only thing she asks for as gifts are books. During the focus group interview, Christian teased her about a time when the teacher took away the book Naya was reading during class. "Ohhh – a book! How scary!" Naya said, mockingly. She says she would rather receive a book for a gift than anything else.

Apparently always having a book nearby has not hurt her academically. During one of my classroom visits I observed Naya switch back and forth between the assignment and her thick novel with ease. The Leadership class was doing a Round Robin reading of the financial literacy text; Naya was able to follow the discussion and not miss a beat when her turn came to read orally. She finished all her foreign language credits by taking AP Spanish in middle school and was able to advance in English and Social Studies. She is the only sophomore in her AP US History class: "…second period I have AP History, and I sit there by myself 'cause it's a junior class? And I'm the only sophomore, so I just sit there and try not to attract attention." Recently, she was inducted into the National Honor Society.

She chose her glasses as her artifact because, "I am a nerd. I rely on them so much. It's not like - if I take 'em off I feel so like...vulnerable. I can't see things..."

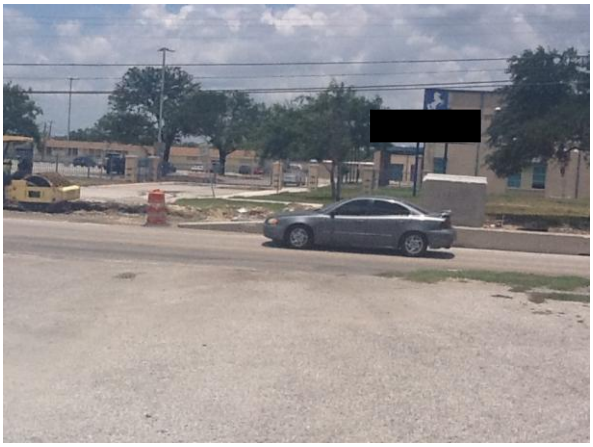
Figure 4.8. Naya's Artifact: her Glasses

A DAY IN THE FIGURED WORLD OF CHASE HIGH SCHOOL: A CRITICAL RACE COUNTERSTORY

The Campus

Construction on the street where Chase is located has kept traffic down to one lane in either direction for more than a year prior to Fall 2012. Yet trucks, backhoes and construction crews are rare. On most days, dust rises from the hard-packed dirt on the unpaved side of the road. When it rains, the dust turns to mud, and the gravel-filled puddles are just one more obstacle, like the knee-high concrete barriers lining the road, that students must negotiate to get into the building. No one talks about the construction anymore. One message on the scrolling marquee near the school's main entrance reminds students to use the crosswalks – except, because of the construction, there are no crosswalks. A transmission repair shop, a pizzeria, several restaurants, a muffler shop, a car wash, and a vacant lot with a broken pay phone line the street facing the school. Students use the lot as a shortcut to and from school, pushing back the scraggly branches to step over the chain link fence around it. In the morning the Mexican restaurant, Taquería el Charrro de Jalisco, does brisk business; during the student lunch periods

the restaurant on the other side of the car wash with one hand-painted sign offering burgers and another advertising pizza, ribs, and subs gets the most traffic.

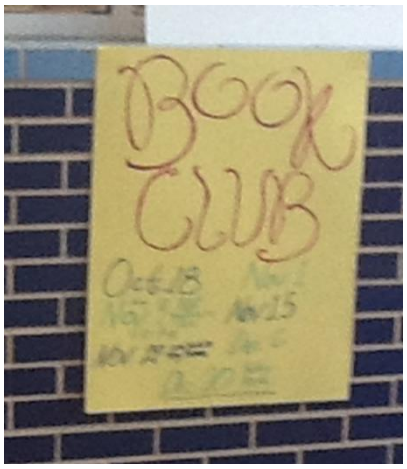


Figures 4.9 and 4.10: Construction in front of Chase High School. Figure 4.9 was taken from the school; Figure 4.10 was taken looking toward the school from the opposite side of the street.

Classes officially begin at 8:45 but students start to arrive as early as 7:30 and continue long after the bell rings to begin class. Some, like Mía, are dropped off in the small visitors' parking lot by the front entrance; although she admits that she is often late because she and her friends stop on the way to school for breakfast. Most of the vehicles, including the ones in the larger student parking lot on the side of the building for those who drive themselves to school, are older models, sedans and pickups. The student parking lot is also where the school busses drop students off, although none of the students in this study rides the busses. Some students walk to school alone or, like Marifer, with friends in groups of two or three, streaming toward Chase from all directions. Students greet one another, some with quick abrazos, form groups. About half the arriving students enter the building, most alone or in twos and threes, even though the building does not officially open until 8:35. The others sit on the stone benches and low walls of the entry or cluster on the cleanly swept walkway. The area is landscaped with grass and small

flowering trees, bougainvillea and crape myrtle. A teacher stands silent duty by the front door amid the groups of socializing students who remain outside until the first bell, even when it is overcast and cool.

A number of students take the separate entrance to the right so they can meet up with friends in the library before class. It is likely that Naya is among them. She usually begins her school day in the library. Bigger than it appears from the outside, it is bright with skylights and recessed fluorescent lighting. The walls display student art. A small, framed sign informs students that "The language in this library is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-homophobic." The library also features student-produced signs.



Figures 4.11and 4.12: Signs in the Library. Left: "The language in this library is non-racist, nonsexist, and non-homophobic."This sign was posted by the school librarian. Right: Book Club meeting Dates. This sign was student-produced.

During the school day, classes meet at one of the several banks of computers. In addition to the usual tall bookshelves there are tables for individual and group work, and an area with a rug, two love seats and several easy chairs, all of them occupied by students reading, earbuds showing. Students staff the circulation desk. A hand-lettered sign on the circulation desk invites

students to join the book club. A picture widow looks over a flagstone courtyard with several wrought iron tables and benches.

When the bell rings, the hallways churn with motion. The students in the library leave through the main library entrance. The ones who waited outside now hustle in through the front doors, past the names of students with perfect attendance in the display case on the left, past the names of those on the honor roll and the offices of the Science and Engineering Academy administrators on the right. Voices, footsteps, the slam of lockers, moving. The crush of bodies is practically unidirectional; smaller students scurry against the tide, ducking, weaving.

Figures 4.13 and 4.14: Display cases in Front Entry. Left: Names of Students on the A and AB Honor Roll. Right: Names of Students with Perfect Attendance. The large posters in the center remind students that not attending school has legal consequences.

The school is clean but timeworn. The walls between classrooms are lined with scratched beige lockers, stacked two high. The old linoleum gleams, but some of the flooring is paved with bricks, their brown paint nicked and gouged over time. Student-created posters advertising spirit week, homecoming, senior cross-country tryouts, and football adorn the walls. A printed poster of smiling youth promoting Project Graduation 2010 (two years gone) hangs on a bulletin board covered in faded, frayed butcher paper.

A warning bell signals the imminent start of first period; adults remind students who are still in the hall that only thirty seconds remain to get to class on time. In the classrooms, students take their seats, settle in. Few pay attention to the televised morning announcements. Tutoring schedules are reviewed, reminders of credit recovery, attendance recovery, announcements for science fair, history fair, talent show auditions and team tryouts. The vice principal's voice over the loudspeaker generates slightly more interest. She announces the names of students who are being rewarded for good attendance. She also reminds students that they are required to wear their IDs to school every day.

That attendance at school is of major importance at Chase is evident without coming into the school. The scrolling marquee in the front parking lot urges students to "COME TO SCHOOL!" and advertises dates that students can go to "Attendance Recovery", sessions they can attend that hour-for-hour make up for any unexcused absences they have accumulated. Posters on the main front door, in the hallways and in the classrooms remind students to wear their radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, designed to track students' whereabouts at all times and touted as a means of improving the school's measurement of student attendance, conspicuously. Attendance is always mentioned during the morning announcements, and students who have perfect attendance for the week are entered into a drawing for prizes. One morning, the assistant principal remarked that prizes were being suspended for the moment because several students who had been recognized had failed to claim their prizes.

Signs in the hallways urge students to come to school to avoid violating truancy laws: one with a large gavel and equal sign tells students that nine unexcused absences means that they must go to court. This is a credible threat for some students. One teacher told me of a conversation she had with one of her students who did little to no work in class. When she

conferenced with him about his failing grades, he told her he only came to school so his mother wouldn't have to go to jail. Since he was, as she described him, one of her "gang kids" and not disruptive, she has stopped asking him for classwork. Texas law requires students to attend school until they are eighteen (State of Texas, 2007).

The other reason students are given for coming to school – and the community is given for requiring that students wear the RFID tags – is that the school receives funds for student attendance (known as Average Daily Attendance or ADA) and that these monies are essential to keeping the school financially solvent .

Figure 4.15: RFID.

Instruction begins when the announcements end. Each classroom has a scuffed, wooden classroom door with one narrow window and a metal kick plate near the floor. During class, all the doors are closed. It is quiet in the hall while classes are in session. Few students remain in the hallways, and those that do most often carry hall passes the size of textbooks, color-coded so that adults know at a glance if they are in the right part of the building.

Chase has a reputation as a "rough" school. In fact, when Marifer and Adriana were asked during their focus group interview what advice they would give an 8th grade GT student coming to Chase next school year, they both replied, "Tell them it's not that bad." Marifer continued that she was told that fights were frequent at Chase. As of the middle of her junior year, she said, she had never seen a fight on campus. "My friend goes to (another Westcreek high

school)," newer than Chase and considered safer. "She says there are fights there every week." Likewise, a staff member remarked that although Chase is viewed negatively by many in the district, there are, "A lot of good things going on here." But, he continued, Chase is like two schools. This is not only evident in the differences between the STEMM and the Chase comprehensive high school program, but also in the less obvious differences between what Chase students experience in Advanced Placement, Pre-AP, and other GT program classes, collectively known as Advanced Academics, and in the general education classroom. The look-alike doors provide few clues to what goes on behind them.

A Tale of Two Chases: General Education

In the general education classroom the student desks are arranged in rows, and each desk is separated from the ones around it. Nearly every desk is occupied. As few as half the students – most of them female – bring book bags or backpacks into the classroom. No one carries textbooks – when Mía's English teacher tells the twenty-six Latina/o students to get the Literature anthology for that day's lesson, one student remarks that they have only used the textbook three times in the four months they have been in school. The textbooks are on a rolling cart near the wall. This is typical of the general education classrooms. Another rolling cart has dictionaries. The room is crowded with furniture – all the desks, plus file cabinets, teacher's desks, bookshelves. One desktop computer sits on the teacher's desk; another is on a small table crowded into a corner.

All of Mía's and all but one of Adriana's classes this year are general education courses, and, with the exception of advanced Spanish electives, have been since they started high school. Mía's older sister and several cousins attended STEMM, but Mía did not consider it when she went to Chase: too much work. Adriana's general education Speech class, a requirement for

graduation, is taught by the campus GT teacher. She encouraged Adriana to change her schedule and take GT Leadership instead, which would give her the required speech credit. Adriana refused. The teacher speculated that Adriana wanted to remain in class with her best friend, who is not in the gifted program.

Instruction begins. Some teachers present lessons from the front of the classroom, others circulate among the desks. Many teach from Power Point presentations projected in front of the class. The Power Point Mía's English teacher uses for today's lesson begins the same way as every other lesson: "The student will ALWAYS bring your pencil to class" (See Appendix C).

In the general education classes I observed, assignments are passed out at the beginning of class and collected at the end. No one is assigned homework and no one is asked to complete unfinished work independently. Students are told that what is not completed within the class period will be continued the following day. Instruction is often a reminder of what the students previously learned that will help them complete the day's assignment (See Appendices D & E).

Some students work, some visit, some sleep. Even though signs in each classroom remind students that their cell phones will be confiscated if they use them during class, some students text, some listen to music. There is a constant, low din of off-task student conversation. This din is punctuated by loud remarks – "I like being on probation! It keeps me out of trouble!" "Twitter's down?" "That's crazy!" Mía's English teacher reminds students that they are to read silently about their characters in order to fill out the chart on their worksheet. The room is not at all silent.

Teachers often offer students the option to work together. It is not clear to me if they are aware of what I observed: that working "together" can turn into one student, then a pair of students, openly copying another's work. I suspect most teachers know this. In their class,

Adriana and her friend quietly share a textbook, writing answers in pencil on their worksheets. They seem genuinely engaged. They sit in the first row, near the teacher's desk. Her speech teacher says that Adriana always opts to work with her best friend when given the choice in class. She never chooses, nor acknowledges, the other gifted-identified student in the classroom. He prefers to work alone.

Adriana raises her head, pauses to stretch and draw a deep breath. She isn't wearing her glasses. She is dressed in jeans and a black sweater and has a scarf around her neck. A slender silver bracelet adorns her wrist. Her large white purse is slung over the back of her chair.

At any given time only about half of the students are "engaged" in the assignment, which is a continuation of the previous day's work. One group talks about going to a party and being drunk. Although they are polite in direct address with the teacher, their conversations with one another are punctuated with swearing. A number of students wear headphones or earbuds, though they are not supposed to be permitted on campus. The teacher directs one student wearing Dr. Dre Beats to get to work – twice. He doesn't. He stares straight ahead for the entire class period, his head bobbing to music only he can hear, hands motionless on his desk. One of the three African-American students – all the other students in this class of twenty-six are Latina/o – is falling asleep. The teacher wakes him and directs him to work with a student sitting next to him. He falls asleep again, and the student he was supposed to work with moves to another group. Other students drum on their desks. Girls in the back row fix their hair, spray on cologne and body spray, and pass around a plastic grocery bag with chips and candy inside to share. One student asks aloud for money to anyone who will listen, so that he can buy candy from another student.

Meanwhile, the teacher is seated at the desk, calling individual students to the front to privately do their speeches for her. They look happy, even proud of their work, when they walk back to their desks.

Adriana is not always so attentive in class. On one occasion her head is down on the desk, and the dictionary she is supposed to use for her reading assignment is unopened and untouched. Although she is not working she is not disruptive. She quietly talks to her friend, her faced turned away from the teacher's desk on her left. When her friend leaves the room briefly, Adriana doesn't interact with anyone else. She is slumped down in her desk, almost reclining. When her friend returns the teacher notices Adriana and directs her to sit up straight. She comes over to check their work and, in an encouraging tone, tells them they are almost done with the first question. She points out where they will find the answer in the textbook before returning to her desk. Adriana, still reclining, looks around the room. She watches the other students. Then she puts her head down again.

This draws the teacher's attention. Once again she directs Adriana and her friend to get to work. The friend answers; Adriana does not respond. She fidgets. She places the dictionary in the book rack under her desk. Once again the teacher gently reminds her to get to work. This time, Adriana sits up, looks at her friend's paper, then the book, and begins writing. She has been in class for one half hour, and has just completed the first question on her assignment. She starts a conversation with the young man sitting next to her friend instead of starting on question two.

The English III assignment is projected on the screen at the front of the room when Mía's class begins. The teacher reads it through. She says, "I'm going to give you a packet on mood and tone and symbolism and you're gonna go – AHHH! We have a lot to do." She then tells the class that she will give them ten minutes to work independently before she comes around to give

offer help. Instead, she starts walking among the crowded desks right away. A student near where I am seated loudly addresses the teacher. “You’re confusing!” she yells.

Someone calls out, “I don’t know what to do!” Another student answers, “You should learn how to listen!” Other students call for the teacher’s help without raising their hands. “MISS!”

“What is ‘diction’?” one male student asks out loud. “Something gay,” the boy next to him answers. His response is followed by random snickers.

I overhear a remark that ends with the word “nigger.” “That’s racist!” the boy in the next desk protests, mockingly. “So? Ain’t no Black people here.” The two laugh over their shared joke. Someone swears aloud and, when reprimanded by the teacher, answers disrespectfully.

Mía’s assigned seat is in the back of a classroom jammed with furniture and people. Of the six rows of thirty desks, hers is the very last one, wedged in the corner and up against two of the wood paneled walls. This class meets in a portable building, and the only windows are narrow and near the ceiling. She engages in a conversation with the two other students sitting closest to her, one young man and one young woman. None of them are working. Mía leans over to look at the girl’s cell phone. The teacher notices, and reminds them group to start working. The girl protests that she doesn’t know what to do. “This is what happens when you’re not here for a month,” the teacher replies.

“It was only two days!” the student protests.

Another student comments. “Seems like forever.”

The teacher looks at Mía and praises her for working before again engaging her classmate verbally. The exchange escalates; the teacher calls for assistance, and the student is removed from the room. As the class settles, the teacher directs Mía to move to another seat to work with

someone else. The long gray, polka-dotted sweater and skinny jeans she is wearing make her look even thinner than usual. She plops down in the new seat and begins working, her purse in her lap. The charms on her bracelet jiggle as she writes.

After a time most of the students are engaged in their work. They question one another. The boy Mía is assigned to work with asks her for help. They briefly discuss the characters they are to write about. He looks down at his paper and realizes he has only finished half of what was required. Mía helps him again, this time confirming her correct answer with the teacher. Although they continue working until class is over, unlike the majority of the other students they do not complete the entire assignment. The teacher collects all the work before the class ends.

Although this is her English class, the class she has told me she likes best, ("I loved English - I love English!") Mía is generally off-task and engages in the little work she does with much reluctance. The summer before her junior year she vowed to do better in school: "I need to focus a lot on school and like, NOT SLACK OFF this year, as much as I did freshman year and sophomore year. So I'm going to try really, really hard to learn everything they say.." One day Mía asks to go to the restroom as soon as she arrives in class, and is told to wait until after the work has been assigned. She takes her seat, pays little attention to the Power Point on the screen at the front of the room or the teacher's instructions even though she follows the teacher's every move. After assigning the day's work, the teacher begins circulating around the room, bending over desks to confer with individuals or groups of students. Mía huffs, thrusts her hand into the air. She watches sullenly as someone else takes the restroom pass and leaves the room. Her partner calls out. "Miss!" The teacher does not acknowledge him. He claps his hands to get her attention. Mía turns and snarls at him. "She's not going to come now because of YOU! I have to go to the bathroom!"

A student near the group the teacher is talking to asks to use the restroom. “You can go when ___ gets back,” she is told. As the teacher turns again to confer with the students about their work, the first student returns from the restroom, and the second quickly takes the pass from her before she can put it down. She rushes out the door.

Mía calls out again that she needs to use the restroom. Most of the students appear to be doing some work. Mía and her partner have not yet started. The student in front of her turns around to ask her what they are supposed to do. Mía answers: “I don’t know. It doesn’t even have a story in here.” Another girl turns to help them. “That’s the story,” she says, pointing to a spot on the worksheet, then the textbook. Mía’s partner compares his paper to hers and laughs at Mía because his assigned story is shorter than hers.

Even though it is early December, it is hot and close in the room. The portable’s door is open to the outside. Sounds of passing traffic and snatches of conversation drift in instead of the hoped-for breeze.

The teacher finally reaches the last row, and Mía and her partner. “Are you okay?” she asks. No, Mía replies, I don’t know what to do. A few rows ahead of her another student calls out, “We’re done!” Her partner reacts with surprise.

The teacher explains the assignment to Mía and her partner and gives an example of how they should do the assignment. Mía asks again to go to the restroom. The teacher says, “Do a couple and then you can go.”

Meanwhile, two other students have apparently asked and gained permission to use the restroom. Mía watches them exchange the pass as one leaves and the other returns.

As the fourth student comes back and hands off the pass to another girl, a boy calls out, laughing, “Did you already pee yourself or what, Mía?” The teacher looks at him, then at Mía.

She stops the student holding the pass before she can leave and asks Mía if she wants to go now. Mía shakes her head, but says nothing. She starts to write furiously without talking to her partner, her head close to the desk, her long hair hiding her face. When the other student returns she wordlessly takes the pass and leaves the room.

The restroom pass is an artifact that confers power on students in GT, PreAP and AP classes and on teachers in general education classrooms. In Advanced Academics, students are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning – power-sharing of the teaching/learning process that is seen less frequently in general education classrooms. The labels "STEMM," "GT", and "Advanced Academics" confer not only academic privilege but instructional independence. Adriana complains that even in general education classes, teachers expect more of GT-identified students than they do of other students, even if they do not offer them the same instructional independence.

Toward the end of class, the teacher walks down the rows of desks and collects the students' papers. She stamps something on the papers of the students who have done their work correctly, no matter how many they finished. Everyone with a stamp will get 100, she says. Mía has failed to give the page and line number of her citations, despite being given an example. Her paper is not stamped.

Mía told me in our interview that she spends much of her free time reading:

> Once I get in a good book I won't stop reading. I'm just trying to see what's gonna happen in the next chapter, and who's doing this, yeah, like it gets me into it. Barnes and Noble - I search around, look at them, read the back - whenever in elementary there was like, (singsong) "Read the first page, and if the first page you get into it..." So I still do that, I read the first page, and then I read the back. It's not that I judge the book by its cover, I'm just trying to figure out what it's gonna be about. I spend hours there, looking around at every book that catches my attention.

She also writes stories, poetry and a blog. ("I like writing a lot. Writing...if I really start thinking, I start imagining, you know like, crazy stuff and I think that's what, like, helped me get in there [being identified as gifted] in the first place.") Yet she is failing English III.

One of the things she told me about being in GT classes was:

> Because I thought it was just so cool, like being a part of something else than just school, like where I could really and like - having all these programs to go to and all these activities ...I always thought it was really cool. (Mía)

It could be that any student, gifted, general education, or special education, would like the activities and programs offered by a GT program. Or it could be that what the GT program offered met a real need Mía had for differentiated instruction. It is clear that this English class does not meet that need.

The students gather their belongings, stand, prepare for class to end. They inch toward the door even though the teacher insists that class isn't over yet. A couple who try to leave the room before the bell rings get spotted and sent back to their desks. Someone tosses a paper ball across the room; it is returned and sent whizzing back. On the next volley it crashes into the wall behind me just as the bell rings and the students rush out. Mía is gone before I can turn around, even though she is the farthest away from the door.

A Tale of Two Chases: Advanced Academics and Gifted Education

Although the website reports that students from STEMM have won the highest honors at the regional Junior Science and Engineering Fair for the past six years, one wonders where these trophies are displayed, since they are not in the front lobby. The answer lies in the school's geography. STEMM students take their classes in the A-Wing. This is not a formal arrangement; a faculty member related that when the science labs were renovated to meet the demands of the lab-oriented STEMM curriculum, many of the other content courses STEMM students take were

moved to that part of the building. According to Marifer, the only STEMM student in the study, the result is, "STEMM kids almost never see regular Chase kids." Even when their classes are held in common parts of the building, as is her PreAP Spanish elective, STEMM students move intact; their content classes rarely include students from Chase's general education program.

Faculty and students alike say the A-Wing of the building is not exclusive to STEMM, but there is a noticeable difference between this part of the campus and the rest of Chase. That difference is not structural, even though parts of this wing have been renovated. Both areas have the same linoleum, the same scratched and dented lockers, the same wooden doors and glass transoms. But banners on the walls announce that these students were semifinalists in a national science competition in 2005-2006 and again in 2009-2010, and that they received an excellence in education award from a local supermarket chain. There are photographs of the 2011 science fair. The trophies that STEMM students have won in academic competitions are in the school library's display cases – and the library is in the A-Wing.

Collectively, all STEMM, Pre-AP and AP, and GT Elective classes form Chase's Advanced Academic Program. Five study participants have chosen GT electives. Marifer enrolled in the Independent Study Mentorship Program for the 2012-2013 school year. Edwin and Natalie took the GT Leadership class as freshman; Naya and Derrick were enrolled in the freshman/sophomore GT Leadership class during the 2012-2013 school year.

As soon as the teacher opens the door to the GT classroom, Derrick claims a spot at the long conference table close to the door. He tosses his backpack on a chair beside him and looks around. The other ten students – Naya, eight other girls, and one boy, make it in before the tardy bell rings and chat quietly during announcements. All the students have books; some, Naya among them, carry both a heavy bag and an armload of books. Her extra books turn out to be her

casual reading. The class meets in the GT classroom. The small space is dominated by the two conference tables in the center of the room. Along one wall is a bank of six Apple computers. A rolling cart – called a "COW" for "Computers on Wheels" – stores and charges a class set of Dell laptops. One of the many tall file cabinets is labeled "NHS" for National Honor Society. Thick binders occupy every horizontal surface. The room is not neat, but it is messy rather than dirty.

The GT Leadership students are finishing up a lesson from their Financial Literacy curriculum. The day's Essential Question is posted on the whiteboard: "How do people use SMART goals when creating a spending plan?" The student objective is: "You will create a spending plan." They have read about interest rates, commercial loans, and credit card debt, and after the reading and discussion can choose to work either on their spending plan or on their latest service project, creating Thanksgiving treats for a local nursing home. Derrick asks to use a "writing utensil."

As the students work and chat quietly, off-and on-task, drifting in and out of conversations, the GT teacher calls each student up to one of the computers to review their grades and attendance – not only for this class but for all their other classes. Together they discuss what steps the student will need to take to correct any attendance errors, make up missing work, retake tests. There is time for a private conference with each student. Some, like Naya's, don't take long. She has perfect attendance and is on the AB honor roll. After a quick check the teacher sends her back to her seat. The photographs of Natalie and the first Financial Literacy Team hang overhead above the whiteboard.

Few lessons are taught from Power Point in the advanced academic classes. Students in the Pre-AP Algebra II class pick up the day's first assignment from a table by the door on their

way into class. Next to the table, the Essential Questions and any student reminders are written on the front whiteboard. Students take their seats and get to work with their assigned partner. The desks are arranged in pairs; there is a small, bright orange or blue or pink bucket at each pair of desks with highlighters, pencils, erasers, and a calculator.

Naya, Christian, and Joaquín are three of the 28 students in this class. Naya sits in the front row and is the first one to complete the day's warm up; she checks her answer with the teacher and then proceeds to help students who raise their hands to get her attention. Christian's partner looks around for someone else to work with – Christian is late! – and just before he gives up, Christian rushes in. They confer briefly, then Christian turns to Naya for help. Joaquín is relaxed, talking to the student next to him. Christian calls Naya over a second and third time, ignoring his partner's offers of help. Joaquín finishes just as the teacher calls time and directs the students who have not finished to do so for homework. Christian keeps working during her explanation, head down, and finishes just as the papers are collected.

The students work with their partners on the day's lesson. They do several trials with Skittles to collect the data they will need to determine an equation that best models their data. The teacher says, "Don't eat the Skittles!" Christian raises his hand and points out that the directions say that the students can eat the Skittles (see Appendix F). The teacher explains: "My last two classes have used them and I need them for the afternoon. I don't have enough money to buy Skittles for each group. Besides, do you wanna eat dirty Skittles?" The class chuckles.

In this classroom, everyone is engaged. There is the constant hum of students' voices, punctuated by louder questions to the teacher, but it does not sound noisy. Students take the pass and leave if they need to use the restroom – they do not need to ask permission. This was the standard practice in all the Advanced Academics classes I observed.

In general, students are given more liberties and more responsibilities in the Advanced Academics classes. They know what to do when they come to class, even though teachers need to remind some students. When students in the GT Independent Study arrive they grab a laptop from the COW or settle at one of the desktop computers and then pick out their binder from the many stored on the bookshelves and file cabinets. They keep their syllabus and all work inside the binder. Although the class work is projected onto the screen at the front of the classroom, it serves as a reminder, rather than a direction, of the students' work, and reflects the expectations for the entire week. The students are doing research on colleges (see Appendix G) in preparation for a speech they must give later in the week. GT Independent Study is another way students can earn their required Speech credit.

There are fourteen students in Marifer's Independent Study class. Six are boys. There are two white and one African American biracial males and one white girl. The other students are Latinas/os. As they work, they discuss the merits of the college programs they are researching. Marifer is chewing gum. She wears a short denim jacket over her dress, and her hair is up in a messy bun. Large rectangular earrings complete her outfit. She talks to the student next to her about the many traditions she's learning about in her research on Texas A&M. She's pretty much decided, she says, not to do clinical psychology, though.

In a different section of GT Independent Study, the six whites and seven Latinas/os have crowded around one of the conference tables – seniors at one end, juniors at the other – for a Socratic Seminar. After settling the students and determining who still needs to give their presentations, the teacher takes a seat away from the table, notepad in hand. I recognize the student who starts today as one of my former Spanish-speaking GT students from my time as an elementary teacher at one of Chase's feeder schools. He is doing his Independent Study in

pathology, as he is interested in medicine. He relates how he had a chance to observe various cells under a microscope when he visited with his mentor. He comments on the equipment he used and how technology is progressing in medicine on a "…quadratic curve; every year there's twice as much technology in medicine as the year before." He is not sure, yet, what his final project will be. The other students ask him questions, offer suggestions, and point out that a good mentor, like the one he has selected, can help you with college admission and with what to study to get into the profession. When he finishes, the group turns to the next student. The teacher has not spoken since she sat down. When one student swears – "Dammit!" – in the middle of her presentation, no one reacts.

Edwin's AP Spanish teacher tells me about the additional preparation she has had to do over the summer as the test was changed to make it more rigorous. Advanced Placement (AP) classes, which are offered in most content and some elective areas, follow a standard, national curriculum developed by the College Board. Teachers of AP and PreAP courses must complete the state of Texas's requirements for 30 clock hours of professional development in gifted education since these courses are considered part of program services delivery in Westcreek (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

The students are in the computer lab, watching and taking notes on a news report about an "atrapanieblas", a device used in Perú for collecting drinking water. "There's always an environmental question" on the writing portion of the AP Spanish IV test, she tells me (see Appendix H). Later, they will write a 200 word essay on the topic. The teacher code switches between English and Spanish with the group. For example, she introduces the assignment using Spanish: "Van a estar viendo un video y luego escribirán un ensayo"[37] and later redirects those

[37] "You're going to be watching a video and then you'll write an essay."

who are off-task – "I'll skin you alive and sprinkle you with salt!" in English, faking consternation. Of the thirty-four students, thirty-two are native Spanish speakers.

The teacher reports that AP Spanish IV is largely test preparation. Another day, the students are in the classroom rather than the computer lab. They practice for the test by writing an essay on gun control. The Essential Question and the assignment are on the board in English. There is a lot of talking in the room; apparently, a number of students have already finished. The conversation ebbs and flows when the teacher threatens idle students with additional work.

It is crowded in the classroom with 34 students, their desks, backpacks, the teacher desk, six file cabinets, three bookshelves stuffed with faded books, and two tall metal storage closets, one in the front and one in the back of the room. The students squeeze through the rows of desks sideways as the teacher calls each one to review their grades with them on her laptop; there are two student desktop computers at the back of the room, although no one is using them today. She pronounces their Spanish names correctly and frequently adds –ita or –ito – Joselito, Elenita – when she calls them. She jokingly threatens to give an off-task student "ojo"[38] if he doesn't get back to work. Students take turns going to the restroom, chat, read, and as they work on their essays, occasionally call out for help: "Miss, 'arma' (weapon) es con "aich" (the letter "h"), right?"

Edwin sits at the front of the class, leaning over his desk in concentration as he writes. He greeted me with a quiet smile when he saw me in the corner of the classroom. From time to time, he makes conversation with the male student next to him.

He is not happy after conferencing with his teacher. He frowns, takes his progress report, studies it, then folds it into eighths before putting it in the back pocket of his jeans. Apparently he is missing an assignment. When he returns to his desk he ignores the student next to him until

[38] "Ojo" is short for "mal (de) ojo", or the "evil eye." Here, the teacher uses it as a shared cultural reference.

he finishes the essay. He turns it in shortly before the end of the period. He seems relieved to have it done. He stretches out his legs, leans back in the desk, and chats with the other student for a few minutes until the bell rings.

The Advanced Academics classrooms, like the general education classrooms, are rarely quiet. In Independent Study one student is talking about a guest teacher in her AP class: "I learned something that day! I want that teacher every day!" Two students complain about how tough another teacher's grading system is: she never gives a student a 100 because she thinks there is always room for improvement. Another student interjects, "It doesn't matter 'cause you get the AP points anyway." Considering this, the students nod, acknowledging that the extra grade points they get from taking advanced courses are good for their GPA but still unconvinced that the grading policy is fair. Students talk about Facebook layouts, Spotify, iTunes. One student in Independent Study uses a graphing calculator to work on a math worksheet. After noticing her working, others agree that they, too, want to work on the bonus problems for their math class. Some in the Independent Study class use the laptop computers to check on their grades. Girls compare the scents and textures of different lotions. I observe similar off-task behavior in the Leadership class. Naya has two books open on the table in front of her during one Round Robin reading of the financial literacy lesson: her textbook and the novel she is reading. Although her attention is on the novel, when it is her turn to read aloud from the text she knows where to start.

What students see on classroom walls is apparently standard throughout the school. There is college memorabilia – banners, pennants, t-shirts from the universities the teachers attended. Every room has at least two signs reminding students that cell phones will be confiscated if they are used in class, and although Christian reports that he has had his phone taken away at least twice, this rule apparently is relaxed somewhat in Advanced Academics classes. I observed

students using their cell phones as calculators to complete homework, and either texting or tweeting or taking notes. Although I never saw anyone have their cell phone taken away during my observations, students take this rule seriously: almost all expressed fears in their interviews it would happen to them.

Mía does not care for the ready-made motivational posters in the classrooms, halls, and common areas of the campus:

> "I would just get distracted and …start reading like the posters that they have? They ones that they *think* they're funny, and sometimes they're not...Like there's this, I don't know, the little light bulb, and like you think something...I don't know, there's this long one; it says like in thirty years it won't matter what shoes you wear or like - those. Like, they're all inspiring and I'm just like...Like the teachers, my English teacher's like "Read it right or write it right?" With the "WR", right? Yeah, like that - little jokes like that. I'm just like, "Why do they buy this?"

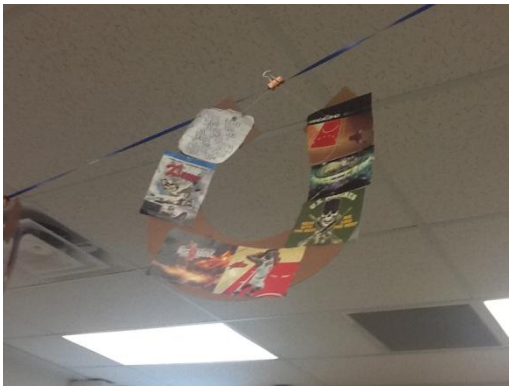
The library is one space where mass-produced signs and posters are not the norm. Its walls are hung with student artwork and teacher and student produced signs (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14).

Each teacher has some personal choice in room decoration. Some reflect the content taught: Edwin's Spanish classroom is hung with travel posters from Argentina, Spain, Perú, Chile, Mexico. Another poster reminds students, in Spanish, when it is appropriate to use the subjunctive. A small bulletin board labeled "¡Anuncios!"near the front of the classroom has the calendar, bell schedule, attendance policy, and other procedural information, and another poster encourages students to "Lea,lea, lea." Some of these are somewhat old and rather faded.

The English III class has bulletin boards on all four walls. One of the boards dedicated to "Stallion Pride" features a school pennant and horse-themed decorations. On one long board, student work is grouped under teacher-made signs, one each for superstition, imagery, tone, setting, mood, allegory, anthropomorphism, personification, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia. At the bottom of this display a torn and bent sign asks the question "What are Literary Terms?" The bulletin board on the opposite side of the room is covered in fabric and is

hung with turkey shapes students have made by tracing their hands. Turkeys like these are common in elementary schools in November around Thanksgiving, but rare in secondary classrooms. In this case each finger represents a story element: plot, characters, setting, etc. There is also a US map, a batik of President Obama, a picture of the Aztec Sun Stone, Texas memorabilia, and learning objectives. These boards remained unchanged over the course of my observations.

The GT room is also hung with student work on the "Stallion" theme: GT Leadership students created self-portrait collages on horseshoe-shaped cutouts. The curriculum requires each student to study self-selected PSAT vocabulary words. These words are then written on poster board, cut out, and hung around the room. Foam cutouts of the icons for Kaplan's Depth and Complexity[39] and a poster of Kaplan's scholarly behaviors also reflect aspects of the Westcreek GT curriculum. Calendars, sign-up sheets for community service volunteer work, bell schedules, thank you notes, and other newsworthy items fill the smallest bulletin board in front.



Figures 4.16 and 4.17: GT Leadership Self-Portrait Collages. Derrick's collage is on the right.

[39] Dr. Sandra N. Kaplan is an influential theorist in gifted education (Karnes & Nugent, 2004). Her work on curriculum differentiation for gifted students using depth and complexity is included as a resource for GT, AP, and PreAP teachers in Texas in the GT Teacher Toolkit II (Texas Education Agency, 2007).

The Algebra classroom more resembles an elementary classroom than it does the other high school classrooms. Multi-colored crepe paper balls hang from the ceiling. There is a calendar in the front of the room, but it is the kind with individual numerals decorated to reflect something seasonal: pumpkins in October or turkeys in November, for example. The entire back bulletin board is dedicated to the students of the week. Everyone gets a turn to be the student of the week. The teacher has stapled five paper bags, each labeled with the class period, to the board. The students' names are above each bag. To the right are multihued index cards in a library pocket. Students are to write compliments about the student of the week on the index cards and drop them into the bag for their class period. At the end of the week the students of the week get to see their compliments.

Final Bell

Students get ready to leave the classrooms before the final bell rings at 4:05. Mía bolts out the door and disappears. If she doesn't have Mariachi or soccer practice, Marifer will look for her best friend so that they can walk home together. Adriana stops at her locker before going to the band hall; later she will wait out front for her mother to come to pick her up, little brothers in tow. Christian heads toward the ROTC building – ROTC is the only department that has its own building – to change for drill team practice, and Edwin and Derrick go to the gym. Joaquín will check in to see if any pictures need to be taken for his Advanced Journalism class before going over to the dance team practice, where he is the official photographer. If they are preparing for a play, Naya will meet up with the Drama Club; otherwise she'll go to the Book Club meeting in the library. Natalie prepares for her afternoon shift at McDonalds or goes to class at her technical college. Many of the other 2,000 plus Chase students will go to their own practices and meetings. The rest board busses, cross the street to cut through the field, visit the restaurants

or gas stations for a quick snack, call out to friends on their way to the student parking lot, wait for rides at the front entrance, or walk, alone or in groups of two, three or four, heading in all directions.

SUMMARY

This dissertation study sought to understand how Adriana, Christian, Derrick, Edwin, Joaquín, Marifer, Mía, Natalie, and Naya negotiated their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of Chase High School. According to the theory, agents – in this case, the student participants – come to understand themselves through the practices, artifacts, narratives and culture they engage within the figured world (Holland, et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2007a). In Chapter Four I presented findings that (1) provided contextual information on the research setting, (2) offered a detailed portrait of each student participant, and (3) demonstrated the contrasting experiences of general education and Advanced Academics students in the figured world of Chase High School. Because identities are dialogically produced in figured worlds, Chapter 5 will present findings on how the participants used community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005, 2006) to negotiate seeming paradoxes in their identities at school.

Chapter Five: Findings. *Negotiating Bilingual, Gifted Identities in the Figured World of Chase High School*

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question in this study was:

> How do gifted Latina/o high school students who have participated in a bilingual education program negotiate their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities in the figured world of schools?

Identity-making is a sociocultural, dialogic processes and identities are not static (Bartlett, 2007b). They are not merely constituted by the labels schools apply to students – gifted, bilingual, at-risk – but also through practices associated with such labels (Urrieta, 2007b). In the previous chapter I described how practices at Chase High School figure students in general education and gifted education settings. It is through these practices, as well as labels, other artifacts, and participation in and relationships with other people and worlds both inside and outside Chase that students come to understand themselves in the figured world of school.

In this chapter my findings are organized to address each of the three parts of the research question: I report how the research participants identify themselves culturally, linguistically, and academically. Next, I will restate and present findings to address each research subquestion, which speak to specific strategies students may use within this figured world:

- In what ways do these students continue to use Spanish in school after it is no longer officially a language of instruction, if at all?
- What role does the gifted Latina/o student's cultural identity play in their experiences at school, if any?
- What contradictions or complementarities do the participants experience in relation to their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities?

These findings reflect that an individual's entry into and relationship with a particular figured world depends on her/his personal social history (Urrieta, 2007a). In order to understand how students negotiate their identities, we must first understand how they define themselves. In so doing I look at the continuum of these students' educational experiences and the interactions between not only these students' personal lives but the available identities themselves.

Finally, I examine how the students exercise their agency (Holland, et al., 1998) in negotiating their identities through their use of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005, 2006). Yosso (2006) theorizes that Latina/o students use the aspirational, linguistic, navigational, familial, resistant, and social knowledge acquired in their homes and communities (including school communities) as capital to negotiate an educational system that is not designed to be responsive to their needs. As was mentioned in Chapter Three, I identified strategic uses of cultural capital in the final Axial Coding phase of my data analysis. In this chapter I present how students address the paradox posed by the central research question through these forms of capital.

CULTURAL IDENTITY

"I might have been born here, but I show that I'm proud to be Hispanic, too." Joaquín

Mainstream discourses around school performance cite the "cultural differences" of Latina/o students, particularly low-income Latina/o students, as a major reason for their academic failure (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Valencia, 2011; Valencia & Black, 2002; Yosso, 2005). In theory, if students have a cultural background that is congruent with the figured world of school is it easier for them to perform in ways the schools recognize as successful. Schools often equate "culture", "ethnicity" and "race."

I define "culture" in this dissertation study as did Yosso (2005): the behaviors, values, material and non-material productions of a group of people. In this section I describe the

participants' personal cultural identification, and explore how the students perceive school practices to be congruent with or contradictory to their personal cultural identity.

The participants report feeling strong ties to Mexico and Mexican/Mexican-American culture. All self-identify as Mexican/Mexican-American. Marifer, Mía, and Edwin were born in Mexico and immigrated with their parents to the US when they were four, five, and eight, respectively. Joaquín, Derrick, Naya and Adriana are US-born children of Mexican-born parents. Both of Christian and Natalie's parents were born in the US. These simple explanations of geography do not convey the complexity of the participants' relationships to Mexico and the US. As her family spends every other weekend in Nava Coahuila, Mía could be described as transnational. Although Marifer was born in Monterrey, she has dual citizenship because her mother was born in Indiana to Mexican immigrant parents. Marifer's mother returned to Mexico as a young adult. While on the surface Christian and Natalie technically are not second generation[40] they have been raised not by their biological parents but by their Mexican-born maternal grandparents. All the participants have family in Mexico with whom they maintain regular contact.

Mía describes her family as "Really Mexican," although her explanation of being "really Mexican" includes a reference to always having turkey on Thanksgiving: "Like quinceañeras, like tamales for Christmas, like everything. It's important, and we're still in that tradition. You have to have tamales, and you have to have posole every Christmas, and if it's Thanksgiving you have turkey, and you'll have turkey for the rest of the week!" she laughs, "if you don't finish the turkey." For Mía, being "really Mexican" includes her family's adopted US customs. This description reveals her hybrid status as a member of the 1.5 generation.

[40] In this dissertation I use Portes and Rumbaut's (2006) generational designations. "Second generation persons" are native born individuals of immigrant parents. Joaquín, Derrick, Naya and Adriana are second generation. Because they came as young children, Marifer, Mía and Edwin are part of the 1.5 generation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Joaquín, Christian and Natalie also mentioned that their extended families visit for Christmas. Joaquín said, "And we all like to stay up to like midnight? And have the presents opened. And then in the morning for the kids so they can open the presents that came from Santa Claus." Natalie commented, "We never leave the house." Food – including the joint preparation of some favorite dishes – is also an important part of holiday traditions that the students considered tied to their culture. Christmas tamales are among their families' traditions, as well. Joaquín related, "My parents like to make tamales a lot..." When I asked if he helped, he told me, "Sometimes, but it takes a lot..." In listing the foods that are cultural traditions in their family, Natalie said, "Tamales; yes, we have those…" Christian broke in: "We don't make them, though." Natalie continued: "Oh yeah, we don't make 'em." They do, however, make buñuelos, "And we make atole," Natalie finished. Joaquín said he really likes "to eat the gingerbread cookies. We don't make 'em, but I like to go buy some from the store. And the cuernitos my mom makes."

Most of the students related that being Mexican or Mexican-American is about tradition. In addition to holiday traditions the students mentioned celebrations, like the quinceañera, that are unique to Latina/o culture. Although she referenced quinceañeras as being important to her family's traditions, Mía did not have one. She explained that she thinks they're just too big, and that she is not "girly" at all. Her sister, on the other hand, always dreamed of her quinceañera. But when the family moved to Texas when Mía was five and her sister was seven, she decided against it: "Whenever we were in Mexico she was all excited, and then, once we moved over here, she was like 'I don't want one.' She just got like disappointed 'cause she wanted it to be with my grandpa and my grandma." Marifer, who has never liked "big dresses and anything"

either, had a quiet dinner at home with family and a few friends to celebrate her fifteenth birthday.

On the other hand, Adriana and Natalie celebrated elaborate debuts. Natalie lit up when she described hers. “It was awesome!” she bubbled. Since hers was held jointly with her older sister – her court had seven members, her sister’s had ten – the ballroom was overflowing. “Yeah, it was big,” she said, grinning. “It was exaggerated,” her sister pronounced. Their grandfather convinced the venue owners to allow them to bring the coach he made for them (the one I saw in the family’s backyard during my earlier visit) inside to drive around the ballroom before taking the sisters to their table. Christian reminded her, “How many times did you cry that day?” Natalie agreed that the debut was stressful, but insisted that the “main time” she cried was when her grandfather insisted on having her photographed with the guests: “...my grandpa wanted me to take pictures with all these people, and I'm like ‘I don't even know half of these people, like, why am I gonna take pictures with them?’ And like, he would get mad after I told him that, so it got to a point where he started yelling at me and I was just like, ‘Alright, I give up’ and I started crying.” “’Cause she’s dramatic – yeah, that’s a good word to use,” the older sister, also formerly in Westcreek’s gifted program, observed. Christian’s comment about his younger sister not using the coach for her quinceañera because she was not “used to living in a Mexican household” demonstrated his association of the celebration with his Mexican cultural identity.

Adriana told me that her quinceañera was stressful, too. I met with her a few days after the celebration, and I asked if she was still tired. She smiled shyly, and said although the quinceañera took a lot of preparation and work, “Me siento como más - ¿cómo se dice? – grown up. Me siento…bueno, en mi quinceañera I felt…special, like…it was my day and everybody was happy with me.”

But more than the food, celebrations, and family ties many of the students identified, there was something deeper, something more intangible that each participant struggled to define, that made them Mexican/Mexican-American. Living in a city that is majority Latina/o helps to cement the connection to ethnic identity. Naya mentioned how the restaurants in the neighborhood serve Mexican food and have names like La Michoacana, El Tequila, and Los Compadres. "In Texas, it's EVERYwhere," she said. Joaquín talked about attending community events like parades and local celebrations for Day of the Dead: "Those come from somewhere my parents talk about a lot; it makes me feel like I grew up there, too, sometimes." Derrick and Naya noted that most of the students on their campus are Latina/o. Still, Naya mentioned the influence of her parents as she attempted to describe the intangible:

> "'Cause it's not like big things like religion or anything, it's just like little things. Like, you always get toge - you have big families, we're all really close, and we always like, we always respect each other? So it's like a lot of these kids here, they don't do that, so...I don't know how to explain it, but.."

By referring to the behavior of her school peers "here" (i.e., the US) in the statement above, Naya indirectly referenced her family's ties to "there" – Mexico. The students expressed that celebrations like quineañeras and shared traditions at Christmas went beyond representing their Mexican heritage. They evoked a direct and continuing connection to the country itself. Perhaps Marifer came closest to representing a cultural identity through her artifact, her vihuela:

> Well, first of all, mariachi is music, so that represents my heritage, or part of it (her father is a mariachi singer), and also I play in a mariachi and it also shows that I like music and I play music. It's not really mine - it's the school's - but they're letting me borrow it.

Even more than her selection of the vihuela is the cultural knowledge she displayed about her hoped-for instrument. The best string instruments, she said, come from Morelia – and she wants to buy one made there. "I can't forget where I came from, even if I moved to the United States

when I was really young. … I still believe that it's a big part of me and it has to stay with me."

All the students have either lived in or visited Mexico, but Mía is the most connected to the physical country. She is intimately aware of the political and civil unrest in many parts of the country. Her aunt has told her about shootings nearby that forced the schools to send students home early. When they cross the border on family trips, military and police officials make everyone get out of the car to conduct a thorough search: "Like the dog food - they would check it to see if there was anything in there." Once, she said, there were soldiers everywhere, with their guns pointed at the family's pick-up truck. She fears for her family's safety: "…if I do watch the news with my parents, I see how bad it's getting. I just start thinking of how I want everybody, my family, to come over here, but it's not that easy. They have their life over there, so..." She prays for them every night, she said.

Marifer lamented that her family won't allow her to travel to Mexico anymore. She does not have a firsthand experience with the violence, but she told me the story of her aunt being caught in a downtown police shootout early one evening. "Mexico," she said, is "slowly descending into anarchy." She and Mía watch the news in Spanish with their parents, although Mía said she often has to turn away. Marifer is well-versed in Mexican politics; she expressed a preference for López Obrador over Peña Nieto in the most recent presidential elections, although she suspects that his election would have had a negative effect on US/Mexico relations – something of which she is always mindful.

For most of the other students in the study, Mexico is where they visit close family. Christian visits frequently, usually every summer and often for extended school holidays like Christmas. Joaquín wistfully expressed his wish to see his grandmother, whom he hasn't visited in quite some time. Naya, on the other hand, would prefer not to see her family in Jalisco. Her

immediate family calls the family home in Mexico "the snake pit." She speculated about an upcoming visit for the holidays: "...it's gonna be really awkward, sitting there, while they all talk around me. They do that a lot. Like I'm sitting there and they just ignore me."

The participants' Mexican/Mexican-American cultural identity manifests on campus in hybridity, perhaps because Chase is a majority Latina/o school (as Derrick said in one interview, "Everybody here is basically Hispanic so..."). Like Amalia and the students in Ek's (2009) study, the focal students spoke mostly English at school, with occasional code-switching, even when observed in upper level Spanish classes. They are aware of using Spanish at school only for specific purposes. Even though all the students voiced the high value they place on their bilingualism, they have adopted the language of school – English – while they are there.

Edwin's AP Spanish teacher engaged in hybrid discourse practice (Kamberelis, 2001) with her class through bantering with them using shared cultural references. The amused expressions on the faces of Edwin and his classmates – and the absence of "What's that mean?" questions – demonstrates that such hybridity is commonplace in that classroom space. I was able to observe the students using Spanish on campus on a very few occasions, such as Joaquín with his partner while they solved problems together in Algebra class. Joaquín, Christian, and Naya's Algebra teacher told me that she does not discourage their use of Spanish in the classroom because she herself does not speak it, and she often has students who are not quite as English proficient as others. The student Joaquín was paired with, apparently, is an immigrant from Spain who was recently placed in her class. Although the PreAP Algebra teacher in the next classroom does speak Spanish, her request to have the student transferred was not honored. I recalled that this student was working with another student during a prior observation. Too often ELLs are paired for entire semesters or school years with another student who carries the burden

of being both learner and interpreter. While this teacher was forced by circumstance to rely on other students to linguistically scaffold some of her ELLs, she recognized the harm in assigning that job to only one – or a very few – students. She had created a liberating learning environment (Quiroz, 2001) that allowed both students in this interaction the opportunity to achieve academically using the full complement of their cultural and linguistic capital.

I also observed Derrick using Spanish with a teacher substituting in his GT Leadership class. They not only spoke Spanish with one another but shared jokes: for example, "Cero a la izquierda.[41]" A few students remarked that they knew the substitute teacher from their Spanish classes. Other than in their Spanish classes, this was the only time I observed students speaking Spanish with a teacher. This bantering and code switching did not occur when the GT teacher, an English-speaking Anglo, was present. Although Naya spoke only in English, she clearly responded to the Spanish language asides. She and Derrick appeared to be flexible in their adaptation to classroom cultural norms and the changing discourses that mark this classroom as hybrid space. Using Spanish as a marker of cultural identity will be discussed in the next section.

Adriana reported helping other students in her Algebra class because "… siempre en math me...me piden ayuda porque la maestra (..) o sea, enseña y yo siempre lo capto y las otras personas necesitan como tres veces…"[42] Lara-Alecio, and Irby (Irby & Lara-Alecio, 1996; Lara-Alecio, et al., 1997) have described this type of classroom assistance as characteristic of the leadership style of gifted Latina/o students. Although there were no opportunities for me to observe Adriana in this capacity, I did observe Naya engaged in the same helping activities in, coincidentally, her Algebra II class. She offered help quietly and efficiently to several students in

[41] To be useless, a nobody.

[42] Translation: In math they ask me for help because when the teacher, well, teaches, I always get it right away and other people need to hear it like three times…

the classroom. Lara-Alercio and Irby say that this unobtrusive style of leadership is likely to be missed as a marker of giftedness if one is not familiar with its cultural context. Additionally, it demonstrates the "respeto" Naya spoke of learning from her parents: she provided help without calling attention to herself or the other students' needs.

I did notice during my observations that the students behaved very differently toward me at school than they did in their homes or at the library. The ways they greeted me, welcomed me into their homes, made offers of food and drink, and offered me abrazos as they said goodbye demonstrated their educación in the conventions of mexicano hospitality. At school, however, they were more reserved; their behaviors were relatively indistinguishable from those of the other youth on campus. Researcher have found that a bicultural, positive ethnic identity is predictive of academic success for Latina/o gifted students (Kitano & Lewis, 2005; Worrell, 2007). Perhaps the participants are enacting hybrid identities in an environment that has at the same time become more accepting of multiple cultural and linguistic ways of being. J.R. Martínez, Director of Bilingual and ESL Education at the time of the study, commented in an interview: "There is a paradigm shift that I believe is beginning to appear at the secondary level. Because it seems that more and more, teachers are understanding the use of the Spanish language as a tool for getting to students, for making things more understandable." He continued, "That cultural piece has hit home for Chase, I think. The mariachi group has only existed I would say within the last seven years. Students have changed and changed the mindset of teachers, you know, 'Why can't I speak Spanish?'"

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

> *"I was born in Mexico; (speaking Spanish) it's part of my culture… so even though I came over here when I was very young, it's still gonna be part of me. I won't forget that."(Marifer)*

Like the students in Jiménez's (2000) study these students claim a bilingual identity, even though all the students in this study spoke Spanish as a first language, and most continue to use Spanish almost exclusively at home. The students agree that speaking both English and Spanish is an asset.

Some of the students spoke some English when they started school, though not enough to be considered proficient. Edwin's family enrolled him in a school in Monterrey where he learned some English for three years before coming to school in the US in third grade. Because of their family's connections to the US, Christian, Natalie, and Marifer had some familiarity with English. The other students were monolingual Spanish speakers until they went to school. Adriana's comment is typical: "Mi mamá nada más sabía español cuando vino aquí y aquí me tuvo y en la escuela empecé a aprender el inglés."[43]

Transition to English

Some of the students, like Natalie, found learning English easy. Christian decided to switch to using English exclusively at school because he felt he had already mastered Spanish and was looking for a challenge. Marifer credits her teachers with her rapid acquisition of English. Her recollection is that it only took her about a year, "'cause the (pre kindergarten) teachers were really pushing it." Even still, she reports, "I was really scared to switch to English, because that's - I didn't know how to - well, spell? I knew how to read and speak it, but I did not know how to spell."

The participants' memories of their elementary bilingual education revealed that fidelity to Westcreek's transitional program model cannot be guaranteed at the campus level. Mía recalls

[43] Translation: My mom only knew Spanish when she came here, and she had me here, and at school I started learning English.

having no instruction in Spanish at Armstrong Elementary. When I asked her what she remembered about her elementary bilingual classes, she responded:

> Um, that they weren't bilingual! (laughs) Yeah, there was some - like they would explain it in English and everybody would get it so they wouldn't say it in Spanish. I think the reading classes were maybe in Spanish. In kinder, they want...they were the ones that helped me, 'cause it was like my first year and they're the ones that helped me understand like every little word and stuff. (*Teachers or kids?)* The kids.

Her recollection is corroborated by Edwin, who became her classmate when he moved to the US in third grade: "It was a little hard at first. Just that I didn't understand some stuff, and like sometimes they make fun of me 'cause I said stuff wrong or something." Derrick, the only student to attend Davis, reported that while his regular classroom instruction was in English, "Once a week we got taken out for bilingual class. We spoke Spanish in that class." Christian and Natalie, who attended Bates Elementary, recalled being instructed in both languages and appear to have had a seamless transition into English. Naya and Marifer reported having a similar experience at Cooper Elementary, although Marifer recalled that:

> I remember we really didn't do anything in English. We just did mostly everything in Spanish? Maybe like the Science, and ...for some reason, like I was... very ...the words for our vocabulary for science, it really stuck to me, I don't know why. It was like, um, "meteorología" y… (Marifer)

Joaquín and Adriana reported more difficulty learning English as they continued to receive instruction almost exclusively in Spanish at Evans until the middle of fifth grade. Adriana said:

> "...pues, la verdad es que nada más en fifth grade fue cuando empezamos a hablar más inglés porque de PreK a cuarto grado nada más era hablar en español y sí hay una... había unas veces que la maestra nos habla en inglés pero...en fifth grade fue cuando allá no nos dejaron hablar español en la clase y empezamos a hablar en inglés."[44]

The expectation of a rapid transition to English was very hard on her. "Ohhh, estaba difícil

[44] Translation: "…well, the truth is it wasn't until fifth grade that we started speaking more English because from PreK to fourth grade we only spoke Spanish, and yes, there is…there were times the teacher spoke to us in English but…in [fifth grade] was when they didn't let us speak Spanish in class and we started speaking English."

porque era como de un semestre al otro aprender el inglés muy rápido y a escribirlo y así. Era muy difícil."[45] Adriana continues to have difficulties with written English. She did not pass the writing portion of the state-mandated English I test in 2012. She attended summer school and passed on her second attempt.

Joaquín found learning to read in English fairly easy, but admits he still struggles with writing in English, something that began for him in middle school: "…luego el trabajo en inglés se puso más difícil. La maestra nos daba trabajo más avanzado en inglés y nos movía bien rápido y no pude alcanzar mío."[46]

Familia

> *"It's the one, the only way I can communicate with my grandma, and I'm real close to her, so..." (Naya)*

Without exception, the participants' most important reasons for continuing to speak Spanish are related to family. Mía and Marifer's parents require them to use Spanish at home, although their desire to do so goes beyond compliance with their parents' rules. Marifer acknowledges that her mother and grandparents are fluent English speakers, but Spanish comes more naturally to her when she is with them. Natalie and Christian say the same about using Spanish at home. Christian said: "We've always talked to them in Spanish. They understand English and they can talk it but we just feel better talking to them in Spanish." Natalie added, rolling her eyes at Christian, "I try not to talk to him AT ALL." Despite Natalie's comment to her brother, family was just as important to the students' linguistic identity as to their cultural identity.

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[45] Translation: "Ohhh, it was hard because it was like we had to learn English really quickly and to write it and all just from one semester to the next. It was very hard."

[46] Translation: "…after the English work got much harder. The teacher gave us more advanced work in English and moved us along really fast and I didn't get it."

Nonetheless, there is evidence of language shift among some of the families. Joaquín uses Spanish at home with his parents, but he and his younger brother, who is also in the GT program, speak English to one another. He explained, "Nos entendemos mejor en el inglés."[47] Naya's father does not speak English; still she reported speaking mostly English with her four sisters, her brother, and her mother. When I met with Naya and her mother, however, I noticed that instead of speaking only English to one another, they frequently code-switched between Spanish and English. Mía is keenly aware that her Spanish proficiency is not what it used to be, and it bothers her. Marifer and Naya expressed similar concerns about what Mía called "forgetting my Spanish." "It's awkward," Naya said.

Their fear of "forgetting Spanish" is not unfounded, according to the literature. Krashen (2000) calls language loss in the second generation "one of the most consistent findings in the field of sociology of language" (p. 437). A study by Portes and Hao (1998b) found that only 16% of second generation eighth and ninth graders (n = 4,924) described themselves as fluent in their parents' language. In her study on language attrition, Wong Filmore (1991) documents the story of a family whose four teenagers have lost their ability to speak and understand Spanish. They do not acknowledge Spanish when it is spoken to them, even though it is the only language their parents speak. And Crawford (2004) notes that although more residents of the United States speak a language other than English at home than ever, the rate of heritage language loss is accelerating (see also Wong Fillmore, 1991). Although he acknowledges that few Transitional Bilingual Education programs explicitly aim to turn ELLs into monolingual English speakers, the eventual transfer of students into all-English instruction often produces this outcome (pp. 43-44). For many children in such programs, then, bilingualism becomes "a brief phase between monolingualism in the native language and monolingualism in English" (p. 13).

[47] Translation: "We understand each other better in English."

Wong Fillmore's research into this "subtractive bilingualism" (p. 323) found that once native-born children of immigrant parents learn English, they often fail to maintain or develop their heritage language proficiency, even if the heritage language was the only one they spoke when they entered school. The afore-mentioned teenagers who communicate only in English with their Spanish-speaking family are reported to be "ashamed of Spanish" (p. 344). Although all of the students are proud of their bilingual abilities, Joaquín's comment that he and his brother communicate primarily in English, in view of their parents' effective Spanish monolingualism, provides evidence that some degree of language loss has occurred. While Mía's chagrin at occasionally forgetting some basic Spanish vocabulary may be attributable to language shift loss, it is also possible that she uses words she does not consider to be the Spanish her family speaks in Mexico but are part of the lexicon of local Spanish speakers. Valdés (2005) notes that second generation speakers may, in fact, be fluent in a contact variety of their parents' language. Nonetheless, neither Mía nor any of the other students in this study are, like the youth in Wong Fillmore's (1991) study, ashamed to speak Spanish.

A Bilingual/Bicultural Identity

While the students all cite the advantage of being able to use both English and Spanish in their future careers (Natalie already finds that her Spanish is useful at McDonalds), in the meantime they identify other advantages. Marifer, Mía, Joaquín, and Adriana offer their assistance as translators, particularly at school when new students arrive from Spanish-speaking countries. Mía is proud that her fluency in both languages increases opportunities for her to help others: "I like that I <u>am</u> bilingual, 'cause there's times that you can help out more people at gas stations, at anywhere."

Orellana's (2009) extensive ethnolinguistic study of child language brokers characterizes

these exchanges as work that has cognitive as well as social consequences. Orellana notes that language brokering is also cultural activity: children who are "bien educados" are expected to contribute to the success of the family and of the community as a whole. This expectation influences many child language brokers, like Mía, to view their work favorably. Valdés (2002, 2003) has theorized that this ability is indicative of a special linguistic giftedness. These home- and community-based exchanges differ greatly from the literacy activities available to children in schools. Language brokering exposes young bilingual children to "a much wider array of genres, domains, forms, and ways of using language" than is typical for monolingual age peers and as such is significant to ELLs' language and literacy development. Child language brokers engage a variety of multiliteracies (Orellana, 2009, p. 119). As such, language brokering fundamentally changes child interpreters. ELLs who are language brokers are engaged in active negotiation of their cultural and linguistic identities. They become masters of the hybrid nature of immigrant childhood.

That said, for all the participants a bilingual identity is important to their perceptions of who they are. It is essential to their cultural identity.

> (On speaking Spanish) It's very important, because I can't forget where I came from, even if I moved to the United States when I was really young. I kinda got used to everything here but I still believe that it's a big part of me and it has to stay with me. (Marifer)

ACADEMIC IDENTITY

"I was always the one that - the overachiever in the family?" (Naya)

Hatt (2007) defines academic identity as

> "…the ways we come to understand ourselves within and in relation to the institution of schooling and how this identity shapes our own self-perceptions of efficacy, ability, and success in relation to academic potential, performance, and achievement."

I use her definition for this study because it recognizes students as agentic ("the ways we come to understand ourselves") in dialogic relationship with schools as institutional figured worlds.

Becoming "The Bilingual Kids"

Imagine a group of children born in the same year. These children were welcomed into loving households. Their development on key milestones – sitting up, walking, talking, feeding themselves, toileting – was typical, and celebrated by their families. The mistakes they made along the way were gently corrected. Through this nurturing and guidance they come to see themselves – they identify themselves and are identified by others – as successful, competent participants in their immediate and extended families, and their communities. Some of these families speak English at home. Some speak Spanish.

Now they are old enough to go to school. All children take on an academic identity when they first enroll as preschoolers or kindergartners. When typically-developing, native English speaking children start school, that academic identity is simply *learner*. When typically-developing, native Spanish speakers start school in Westcreek, and in most other districts in the US, their identity as learners is subordinated to the perceived deficit of their not having mastered English. In Texas, where the label Limited English Proficient (LEP) is still in the statutes and its use only recently discontinued by the state education agency, their linguistic identity as Spanish speakers dictates a specific classroom placement and additional assessments their English-speaking peers will not take. Eventually, they learn that learning English is what counts. Their linguistic identity determines their academic identity until they are deemed to be proficient English speakers.

Although the participants were unaware that the State of Texas considered them at-risk of academic failure, Marifer sensed that being in the bilingual class had a negative connotation:

> Well, I wasn't sure if it was a good thing or not? Because like everybody always made it seem like, oh, "The Mexicans" and stuff like that.

After talking about it with her mother, Marifer came to believe that bilingualism gave her advantages monolingual students didn't have. Many participants recalled that being in the bilingual class made them feel special.

The students in Naya's bilingual class relished their bilingual abilities. They were a very close group and did not mix with the English speakers in their grade level. Although this isolation has been reported in the literature as potentially alienating at best, if not segregationist (O. García, 2009; Valdés, 2001), Naya reported that the students in class didn't see it that way. She described their attitude toward monolingual English speakers: "I got like a secret language that you don't understand." She recalled that the bilingual class was also very academically talented, and this probably worked to their advantage: "We had these competitions every - I think it was every week or every day - math, math things? And the Spanish class always won." Her face radiated a satisfied smile at the memory. "We always won. It was the greatest thing."

Joaquín and Christian also felt that their burgeoning bilingualism was affirmed, although they attended different schools. Christian fondly recalled listening to stories in Spanish in his classroom. His third grade teacher "would want us to speak Spanish inside the room but when we went to lunch and all she wanted us to speak English.'Cause it was a bilingual class and she wanted us to have an opportunity to speak both languages." Joaquín's second grade teacher let them know how special they were among the other second graders because: "Eramos los únicos que hablaban dos idiomas."[48] Naya reported that when she was transitioned into an English-only classroom, losing membership in that bilingual community was more traumatic than the change in her language of instruction. She described her class as "tight-knit" because theirs was the only

[48] Translation: "We were the only ones who spoke two languages."

bilingual classroom on their grade level, and said "…we all stuck together, and all the English classes were like mingling and we just kinda grouped together." Years later, as she recalled leaving the bilingual classroom, her body language changed. Her eyes narrowed and her shoulders tensed. Although her hands were still on the table in front of us, she hugged her bent elbows closer to her body. "I was really nervous, 'cause like I said, we were really tight-knit? So I didn't really know anybody in English? But a couple of other kids got transferred into English too? So...yeah." Then Naya sighed and relaxed, settling back in her chair.

Gifted Identification: Elementary School

"It's something ...you should be proud of, 'cause it's for smart kids who...they wanna succeed." (Naya)

The students recall little about how they came to be referred for neither testing for GT services nor the testing itself. Edwin's account is typical:

> "Umm, just third grade, they like, came for some, me and some other kids and they just said we had to take a test, yeah. It was in English. I just remember that they put us in a room and then like in the test there were just like some shapes and then they told you to draw something with it; yeah, that's what I remember." (Edwin)

Naya remembered letters being sent home with her before the actual testing began. She offered the most detailed account of the testing process:

> "It was really easy, like they would point out shapes and say, 'What is this?' Well, it's obviously a square." (Naya)

During the focus group interview, Naya repeated her observation and Natalie, laughing, enthusiastically agreed.

Because the instruction they received in their gifted education pullout program was delivered by Spanish-speaking GT specialists, these students developed an academic identity that overlapped with their linguistic identity as "bilingual kids." In this way, their linguistic identity was refigured as smartness (Hatt, 2007, 2012). Unlike the schools studied by Valencia and

Villarreal (2011), the elementary schools where these students were identified as gifted did not underidentify gifted students, despite having similar numbers of students of color, students living in poverty, and ELLs. The Texas Education Agency assigns each Texas public school to a Campus Comparison Group of forty schools by closely matching their demographic characteristics. The five elementary schools attended by study participants are in the same Campus Comparison group as four of the ten schools in the Valencia and Villarreal (2011) study. They found those Austin Independent School District (AISD) schools to have the lowest percentages of gifted-identified students when compared to the other AISD elementary schools. Table 5.1 compares each of the five Westcreek elementary schools with the AISD schools in their campus comparison group included in the Valencia and Villarreal (2011) study. Even though the Westcreek schools are ranked in descending order by their percentage of GT-identified students, three have percentages of identified gifted students that fall within the 6.1%-11.3% range Valencia and Villarreal found for AISD schools with the highest percentage of identified students.

At the time of Villarreal's original dissertation study (Villarreal, 2004), the Westcreek schools had lower identification rates than they currently have, as shown in Table 5.2. It should be noted that while over the same time period identification rates rose in Westcreek, they fell all but one of the AISD schools in their comparison groups.

These schools are not an exception but the norm in Westcreek. Even though only 39% of Westcreek's seventy-one elementary schools are designated bilingual schools, seven of the ten elementary schools with the largest number of GT-identified students serve bilingual students. Six of those bilingual campuses receive Title I funds due to large enrollments of low income students (Westcreek Gifted and Talented Program, 2012). Unlike what is reported in much of the

literature regarding the experiences of Latina/o students and, in particular, Spanish-speaking Latina/o students, changes in practice and policy in Westcreek that included Spanish-language testing, the hiring of Spanish-speaking GT specialists, and Spanish-language instruction and curriculum expanded opportunities for the participants and students like them to be referred, tested, and served as bilingual gifted students, according to J.T. Martinez, Director of Bilingual and ESL Services for Westcreek ISD.

Given Westcreek's policies at the time of their identifications, it is likely these participants' testing was done in Spanish although, again, the students are unclear about the language they were tested in. Once identified, the students acquired an additional academic identity – gifted. They have vivid memories of their first experiences in the elementary GT program. Naya's recollection is typical:

> The first day we went, they said, "Pick out some tools from a magazine" - it was - "Why?" I didn't understand what was going on. It was pretty cool. (Naya)

What institutional practices position a student as gifted once they are identified? As noted in Table 3.2, gifted students in elementary and middle school have different educational experiences than students who are not identified as gifted. The students came to identify themselves as gifted through experiences associated with gifted program services: differentiated curriculum, a different classroom setting, relationships with other GT-identified students, relationships with GT teachers, and relationships with non-GT identified students.

Differentiated Curriculum

The participants all commented on the different curriculum they followed in the GT classroom. Even though the students did not attend the same schools, their experiences are

Table 5.1: Comparison of Westcreek Elementary Schools Attended by Study Participants with AISD Schools from Valencia & Villarreal (2011): Selected Demographics

School	Students	% Economically Disadvantaged	% Latino	% Students of Color	% ELL	% GT Identified	Comparison Group Includes	Comparison % GT Identified
Bates Elementary	Christian Natalie	95.5%	95.4%	99.2%	24.6%	9.4%	Allison Langford	(0%) (0.6%)
Cooper Elementary	Marifer Naya	95.0%	93.8%	95.89%	20.9%	6.3%	Brown Langford	(1.0%) (0.6%)
Evans Elementary	Adriana Joaquín	92.6%	93.3%	97.5%	21.03%	6.2%	Sánchez	(0.8%)
Armstrong Elementary	Mía Edwin	94.7%	92.9%	94.9%	21.9%	6.0%	Brown	(1.0%)
Davis Elementary	Derrick	90.9%	91.9%	95.8%	15.4%	4.8%	Allison	(0%)

Table 5.2: Comparison of Westcreek Elementary Schools attended by study participants with AISD schools in Villarreal Dissertation 2002-2003: Selected Demographics

School[49]	Students	% Economically Disadvantaged	% Latino	% Students of Color	% ELL	% GT Identified	Comparison Group Includes	Comparison % GT Identified
Bates Elementary	Christian Natalie	93.5%	90.9%	95.1%	23.2%	5.6%	Allison Langford	(1.6%) (0.9%)
Cooper Elementary	Marifer Naya	89.9%	89.9%	92.8%	24.7%	3.9%	Brown Langford	(1.5%) (0.9%)
Evans Elementary	Adriana Juan	92.3%	90.7%	95.4%	19.5%	4.9%	Sánchez	(0.8%)
Armstrong Elementary	Mía Edwin	91.5%	82.8%	86.4%	14.1%	1.9%	Brown	(1.8%)
Davis Elementary	Derrick	88.2%	87.4%	92.7%	17.7%	1.5%	Allison	(1.6%)

[49] Schools #1 and 3 were in their first year with a Spanish-speaking GT specialist. The other schools had English speakers. Both schools hired a Spanish speaker in 2004-2005.

similar because the district's elementary program follows a common curriculum of year-long units of study. Marifer, Christian, and Mía recalled the architecture unit:

> … my partner was some guy, Edwin[50], and she (their teacher) made us do like a building out of cardboard. Like we had to look up a building that we thought was interesting and we had to build it, and like all of that, like. I remember my mom got so mad at me 'cause I had paint all over my pants, and it wouldn't come off, but I was having fun. (laughs) (Mía)

> …like we all had to make a bridge and me and my grandpa made it out of wooden sticks from the back where we have our branches and it was like the most unique one out of all the kids. (Christian)

Marifer felt that studying architecture in the GT classroom gave her social capital she was able to employ when she visited family in Mexico the following summer:

> I remember we were doing architecture. Then after that year, during the summer, I visited Morelia, Michoacán? Because my aunt lives over there? And the, like the architecture, like the inside of the stores, and like in the downtown, they were so pretty. And I was remembering like everything I saw in the books. (Marifer)

They also mentioned the Space unit:

> And then we made rockets, too, and my grandpa helped me make that, too, to put springs under where it flew, and it beat everybody else's, too. (Christian)

> ...no...the space thing? We were learning about NASA, and about...also the inventions, like we did Wilbur and the other one (hhh), the plane, the ones in the...oh, the Wright brothers, right? Yes, okay. Them. (Marifer)

> Mmmm...recuerdo un proyecto que nos...que teníamos que hacer de...un inventor. Escribir un...papel sobre un inventor. The Wright Brothers. (Joaquín)[51]

and the unit on Law and Justice:

> Era uno de la...de la Constitution, and we had to write it and have how it's written, and I really liked the way we write, we wrote, it was like for one day. (Adriana)

> They did, like, interesting things about the government, a lot about the government, and the president. It was really interesting... (Naya)

[50] Mía did not know at the time that Edwin was also a participant in the study.

[51] Translation: "Ummm, I remember a project that we…that we had to do about an inventor. Write a paper about an inventor. The Wright Brothers."

The students spoke positively of the opportunity to study topics not covered in the general education classroom. Naya commented, "…it was so like - out of the ordinary, what they were doing." Marifer had similar recollections: "I remember like things we did in GT that we weren't doing in regular classes. I think it was like, science?" This differentiated curriculum also included field trips related to these units of study in which only GT students participated.

In the comments quoted above, Adriana, Christian, Mía, and Naya made reference to activities and projects they did in GT. Joaquín recalled creating a Power Point presentation during his study of the Wright Brothers. In fact, all the students spoke enthusiastically of the project-based orientation of the GT curriculum. One word several of them used to describe the work they did in the GT setting was "fun." Here are a few examples:

"…she always had so many fun assignments for us to do." (Mía)

"GT was fun. We did nothing but like experiments. Not like now." (Derrick)

"Ms. _____ was really active with us, so we'd have a lot of fun in that class." (Christian)

What is also notable in these comments is what the students do not mention. With the exception of Adriana's Constitution writing activity, none of the students mentioned paper-pencil work or worksheet completion during GT.

Setting

Since Westcreek's elementary gifted program services are delivered in pullout classes, the students were in a different classroom for GT instruction. Mía recalled what it was like being left behind in the general education classroom before she was identified as gifted:

> They (her closest friends) would bring out (GT) projects...they would always rub it in my face, "It's so fun! When are <u>you</u> gonna get in?" and I'm like, "I don't know..." Like, always just jealous, trying to change the subject..."Don't rub it in! 'Cause I wasn't in there!" I would hate that they would take them out of classes because then I was always so bored and always trying to find something to do, talk to other people…So whenever they would leave I was all sad all the time.

After she was identified, she remembered: “Once I got in we were like, ‘Yeah! Now we're finally all together again.’"

One difference the students recalled was the size of the classes. Several mentioned that there were fewer students in their GT class, although the class size of four or five that Christian remembered would be rare.

The GT classroom was also the first time the students had been placed exclusively with other gifted children. Naya recalled how she felt in the beginning:

> They were really - they were really advanced. I don't know, I don't know, it was weird. I don't know.

Joaquín noticed the change in the type of discourse in the GT classroom:

> Me fascinaba porque eran...era como hablaron…su regular era interesante, todo el tiempo que estábamos. (Joaquín)[52]

Some students felt that the GT classroom was a place where they fit in (emphasis added):

> I guess it's when you're GT, you're with more smart people, more mature people. Like in elementary, it'd just be *a group of people where you could feel like yourself, like around them*, instead of being with the class of like 20. (Christian)

> I was just so excited to do something with *people that actually enjoyed their time at school*. (Mía)

> It made me feel special. Just like..well, because, I was with some of my friends in there, so it was like *'Well, I guess I'm not the only one that's smart.'* (Natalie)

Relationships with Teachers

Each Westcreek elementary school has a gifted and talented education specialist. This teacher’s primary responsibility is to deliver GT program services to identified students at all grade levels. As a result, the relationship a GT student has with the GT teacher can last for many

[52] Translation: I loved it because of…they way they talked, even everyday stuff was interesting, all the time we were there.

years – sometimes a student's entire elementary career. Most of the students had fond recollections of particular teachers. Christian and Natalie had the same teacher in different GT classes at Bates. While Natalie characterized her as an "odd one" (laughing and looking me in the eye as she did do), Christian recalled that she was "crazy" and "really active with us." Some students developed special bonds with their teachers over the course of these long-term student/teacher relationships. Derrick mentioned that his elementary GT teacher was "cool" and recalled that she drove a Mini Cooper. He also told me that he still has the crystal figurine of praying hands that she gave him when he moved on to middle school.

Naya analyzed the motives behind Ms. _____'s teaching style: "It was a *little group*, it was taught by Ms.___, and she was very strict; she really *wanted us to succeed*." (emphasis added). What Naya perceived, perhaps, was the kind of critical caring Antrop-González (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; De Jesús & Antrop-González, 2006) observed and described in his studies of behavior and commitment among teachers of color in two community schools serving Latina/o students.

Relationships with Other Students

There is extensive literature regarding the effect being identified as gifted has on gifted students and their relationships with general education students (e.g. Tracy L. Cross, 1997; Tracy L. Cross & Coleman, 1995; Feldhusen & Dai, 1997; Gross, 1998). It is not unexpected, then, that the participants in this study reported similar experiences. Almost uniformly, they related being called "nerd":

> Um, you're automatically *labeled* a nerd. Like, "Oh, you're nerdy, because you're in gifted and talented." (Naya)
>
> Everyone *made fun of me* 'cause they thought I was a nerd. (Natalie)
>
> They would *call me nerd*. (laughs) Yeah. Being in GT wasn't cool. (Mía)

> I've been *called a nerd* before and stuff. Just some kids, in school. But then they realized it was a good thing. We were little still, so "oh, you're in GT" (teasing intonation, amused) (Marifer)

In the end, such labeling did not have negative effects. As Edwin put it: "No...(laughs) that doesn't...yeah...that doesn't really bother me." Naya, Natalie and Marifer shrugged it off as something they already knew about themselves – they considered being called "nerd" a validation of their intelligence:

> But it wasn't like a bad thing? It was more like - a nerd meant you were really smart? So they didn't take, they didn't mean it in like a bad way? They were just like, "You're a nerd." (Naya)

> It didn't really bother me...'cause, like, I knew I was smart and...probably smarter than them put together. (Natalie)

> It wasn't really an insult to me because...it... I'm smart, so... (Shrugs)...I don't care. (Marifer)

Westcreek's elementary GT program created a gifted institutional identity for identified students through practices of separation – differentiated curriculum, removal from the general education classroom, placing gifted students together in identifiable groups. This separation met Mía's need for differentiated studies:

> (The best part of GT was…) "Getting out of classes (laughs). Yea:h....classes were boring at times…"

It also created a context within which she saw herself as a member of distinct group.

> Because I thought it was just so cool, like being a part of something else than just school, like where I could really and like - having all these programs to go to and all these activities ...I always thought it was really cool. (Mía)

Christian also related how over time he began to see himself as part of a group that was different from others who were not in the GT program. In commenting on how being in the GT program has never worked against him, he offered this example: "…'cause they usually take us

out of class and *when we do important assignments* they take us out." (emphasis added) Marifer told of a time when the GT class was asked to go around to general education classrooms to share what they had learned about space.

Becoming Bilingual, Gifted Students

The participants in this study reported having elementary GT instruction that met their needs as both ELLs and gifted learners. As they described their experiences in the GT program, they frequently contrasted them with the instruction they received in their general education classes. Adriana credited her GT instruction with helping her to "think at a higher level" and "think … outside the box." She continued, "…with GT it makes you look like everything, not just a straight line; you look outside."

Recall that Marifer doubted that being in the bilingual program was a "good thing." Joaquín also intuited the deficit perception some people had of bilingual education classes. When he was asked what it was like to be identified as gifted, Joaquín responded: "Quiere decir que vieron que aunque no sabía mucho inglés que sí hacía el esfuerzo y sabía hacer el trabajo."[53] The opportunity to be identified and to receive GT services in Spanish affirmed his intelligence. To paraphrase the notion of "School as Sanctuary," coined by Antrop-Gonzalez (2006) to describe an urban high school that offered its students a caring environment where their cultural, linguistic, and social realities were affirmed, the GT classroom offered sanctuary to these gifted ELLs by providing a space where their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities could overlap and grow. Mía best captured what the participants experienced in those classrooms when she said that elementary GT was "…my little escape from…school, like…"

[53] Translation: "It meant that they saw that although I didn't know much English, I did put forth more effort and I knew how to do the work."

Middle School

Middle school students in Texas take content-area classes in English (sixth graders also are required to take Reading), Social Studies, Math, Science, a required PE class, and elective courses ranging from instrumental and vocal music to industrial arts. When Westcreek gifted students go to middle school, they are for the first time channeled into different classes than general education students. The table below summarizes the differences between Westcreek's elementary and middle school GT programs.

Table 5.3: Comparison of Elementary and Middle School GT Program Services in Westcreek

Elementary GT Program	**Middle School GT Program**
Pullout class: meets once per week	GT Studies: assigned class, meets daily
Enrichment Curriculum	Accelerated content plus enrichment curriculum
All other content instruction is at grade level	Content Instruction is at grade level or accelerated
Instruction in English and Spanish	Instruction in English only
Small group instruction (5-15)	Average class size (20 – 25)

In other words, the way GT program services are delivered in middle school separates gifted students from general education students for at least one class period *per day*. The students in this study had GT Studies class during their Reading period as sixth graders, and during English Language Arts period in seventh and eighth grades.[54] In addition to GT Studies, students are assigned to advanced courses in Math, Science, and Social Studies based on grades, teacher recommendation, and test scores. Parents may also request that their students be placed in advanced classes if they have not been formally recommended. Students who are not identified as gifted also may be assigned to accelerated Math, Language Arts, Science or Social Studies based on the same criteria, but only GT students may take GT studies classes. In middle school,

[54] Most Westcreek middle schools deliver GT services through English Language Arts, although a few offer GT studies through other content areas.

then, it becomes possible for gifted students to study an entirely different curriculum than that offered to general education students.

One obvious change in middle school is the loss of opportunities to continue content area instruction in Spanish. For some students who had been used to instruction in both Spanish and English, the change to an English-only curriculum was not a problem:

> It was a change, 'cause there was nothing in Spanish anymore, but it wasn't like...stressful or anything 'cause I knew English. (Natalie)

> Yeah, I liked it, yes. I had two, two teachers. One of the English teachers. (Edwin)

Others felt the pressure of receiving all their academic services – including their GT services – in English only:

> Umm...middle school...umm, (..) pues más o menos (fue difícil) porque[55] they would in eighth grade they mixed reading with GT. We had the same period at the same time and it really didn't work out. We would just read and read and read; we didn't do anything for GT. (Adriana)

> Eran más difíciles las clases de inglés. El inglés y la lectura. Poque todavía no sabía escribir muy bien en inglés.[56] (Joaquín)

The way they students described general and gifted education changed when they talked about their middle and high school experiences. They said "my class" or "our class" when they talked about their elementary classrooms and "my GT class" when they talked about GT services. When talking about middle and high school they sharply distinguished themselves as gifted students from general education students.

> Umm...it *separated you from the regulars*, I guess. So what's good about being separated from the regulars? You're not average. *You don't wanna be average*. (Derrick)

> (My Spanish-speaking friends) …they're in different classes than me; they're regulars and yeah - they used to be (in the gifted program) 'til they told me it was too hard; too much work. No, *I get bored when it's too easy*, so...(Edwin)

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[55] Translation: "Ummm…middle school…well, it was more or less (hard) because

[56] Translation: The English classes were harder. English and Reading. Because I still didn't know how to write very well in English."

> It was a...*a unique class*; it *wasn't like with all the little wanna-be people* in there, it was mostly just smart people. (Wanna-bes?) I guess the kids who wanna act out and stuff like that for no reason. (Christian)
>
> Because regular Chase, they had them in the freshman building so I didn't really get to talk to my other friends. They were not in STEMM, the PreAP. (Marifer)
>
> No. No AP, no Pre-AP. No, uh-uh. Yeah, all regulars. (Mía)

Most of the participants used the word "regular" in describing students in middle school and high school who were not in the GT program or taking advanced classes. It could be that because they are Spanish speakers, the word "regular" may have a more pejorative connotation for these students than its English cognate would indicate. While "regular" can be translated as habitual or standard, it also can connote something that is substandard or mediocre (Real Academia Española, 2012).

Because GT students spend more class time with other gifted students in middle school than they did in elementary school, this separation has social as well as academic consequences. Even though the participants' elementary school experiences separated them from other students as ELLs and as gifted students, with the exception of Naya they did not comment on being in different classes as a factor in choosing and developing friendships. Indeed, the participants made relatively few comments about their elementary school friendships.[57] While researchers agree that giftedness is frequently socially stigmatizing (Tracy L. Cross & Coleman, 1993; Manor-Bullock, Look, & Dixon, 1995), and the students reported some degree of teasing in elementary school, this did not appear to affect their friendships. Friendships in middle and high school, on the other hand, were frequently mentioned. The friend selections they made parallel friendship patterns in the literature about gifted adolescents. It is not unusual for gifted adolescents to reject the gifted identities they found comfortable in elementary school (Swiatek,

[57] Mía's friendship with her two friends and classmates from kindergarten, which is ongoing, was an exception.

2001). While none of the study participants rejected being gifted, some did exhibit coping strategies that are consistent with the findings of prior research.

Rimm (2002) identified five social coping strategies employed by gifted students, based on Siwatek's (1995, 2001; Swiatek & Dorr, 1998) work in developing the *Social Coping Questionnaire*. Of these five, the participants in this study appeared to rely primarily on three: social interaction, peer acceptance, and denial of giftedness. Gifted students who use the social interaction strategy seek to mitigate the possible social stigma of giftedness by increasing their interpersonal connections. The most common way gifted students employ this strategy is by participating in extracurricular activities. School-based extracurricular activities in Westcreek start in middle school. It may be no coincidence that the students who took Advanced Academics courses were those who were also most involved in school- or community-based extracurricular activities. Table 5.4 lists each participant's Advanced Academics course load and extracurricular activities during the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 5.4: Participants' Advanced Academics Coursework and Extracurricular Activities, 2011-2012.

Participant	Advanced Academic Courses	Activities
Mía	0	0
Natalie	0	0*
Adriana	1	Band
Derrick	all	Sports: football, soccer,
Naya	all	NHS, book club, Drama Club
Juan	all	Photography, community service
Christian	all	ROTC, church group
Marifer	all	Soccer, band, mariachi, church group
Edwin	all	Football, NHS, track

*Natalie took no advanced classes her senior year. Prior to that, she took all PreAP and AP courses and was on the Track and Financial Literacy Teams.

The social interaction strategy may explain why some students made efforts to continue their friendships with non-GT identified friends. Participation in activities not specifically

designated for gifted students expanded their peer interactions in contexts that were non-academic. Some students purposely cultivated friendships with students who were not GT-identified:

> I think my friends are...they're really good, a lot of them. They're some who might not make the best decisions but they have good intentions. Some of my friends are sort of alike but...like we like to play basketball a lot; my friends around here, we really like to get outside. I have other friends in my classes. (Joaquín)

Derrick, Mía, Adriana, and Edwin reported that their best friends were not GT-identified.

Others, like Naya, sought out friendships with other gifted students. One way to employ the second strategy, peer acceptance, is to limit friendships to others who are also gifted. Marifer established new friendships primarily with other students who were also in the gifted program that have lasted through high school:

> "No, a lot of my friends were in it, so...friends from (elementary school) and also friends at my...at (middle school). I'm mostly friends with like - 'cause I don't really usually see *the regular Chase students*? - so I was mostly friends with the STEMM students."

Although Christian spends much time with the other cadets since he joined ROTC in high school, and considers them friends, his continuing friendships are with other GT-identified students, as demonstrated in this exchange he had with his college-aged sister, who described them as "nerdy dumb" during one of my interviews with Christian:

> Christian: They're not like me, but they're somewhat like me. Just how dumb they act.
> Sister: They're like - all of them are like - they're dumb. They come up with words and stuff…
> Christian: Yeah, we come up with some... stupid stuff. Yeah. A...ask my sister.
> Sister: They make up words like - they'll call people a name and it's just like, things you've never heard so you're just like...like…well, they'll say some random stuff –
> Christian: (prompts)…like my best friend…
> Sister: (remembering) Oh, 'your mother's a cabbage' and I'm like... 'A what?' 'Oh, we made that word up' and I'm like, 'alrighty then…'

As the nature of the middle school programs changed, and their GT program services were delivered through coursework rather than through pullouts, some students questioned whether

they were still in the GT program. All nine students continued to receive GT program services in middle school through content-based classes designated for GT students only. Because these classes were not pullout and had course names and curriculum that reflected core academic content, students may not have recognized them as GT program services. This was clearly the case for Mía.

> And then I got to middle school and then - I think I was in there in 6th grade - and then I - they just never... said anything about it anymore like 7th and 8th, and then 9th...like...nothing. In sixth grade I did. In seventh and eighth...? (Mía)

Mía embraced her gifted identity in elementary school and felt a strong sense of belonging in her GT classroom. The changing way program services were delivered in her middle school disrupted that sense of community. Mía took advantage of the chance to extend her AP credits by taking AP Spanish IV her freshman year, but has taken no Advanced Academics courses since. She decided not to apply for STEMM because she did not want to seem like the least intelligent student in the class. Even though she spent her free time maintaining a blog and writing poetry and fiction, she participated little in her English classes. By some standards, Mía fits the profile of a gifted underachiever. Neither of her two best friends, whom she met in middle school, is in the gifted program. In fact, Mía reported that with the exception of longtime family friend M_____, she had no friends who are also gifted. This is the social coping strategy called "denial of giftedness" (Rimm, 2002) By choosing only general education classes – and friends – Mía was able to avoid not only any social stigma attached to her giftedness but also, perhaps, demands for high academic achievement from her teachers.

High School

"*But we don't really have it* (GT) *anymore in high school." (Christian)*

In high school, as I noted previously in Table 3.2 and also in Table 5.4 below and described at the beginning of this chapter, GT program services are different still.

Table 5.5: Comparison of Middle and High School GT Program Services in Westcreek

Middle School GT Program	High School GT Program
GT Studies: assigned class, meets daily	Gifted students must opt to take GT elective courses
Accelerated content plus enrichment curriculum	PreAP, AP, Dual Credit and STEMM courses considered program services for gifted students
Content Instruction is at grade level or accelerated	Dual Credit classes offer college credit; AP classes may yield college credit depending upon end-of-course AP test scores
Instruction in English only	Instruction in English only, with the exception of AP and PreAP International Languages (foreign language) courses
Average class size (20 – 25)	Average class size: 30 -35 (GT electives average no more than 15)

In reality, Christian is still receiving program services through his enrollment in PreAP classes, according to the Westcreek plan for high school gifted students. Perhaps because these classes also enroll non-GT identified students, they do not fit the program services Christian expected based on his elementary and middle school GT experiences. Advanced Placement courses are a primary means of offering advanced coursework for gifted students in US high schools (Hertberg-Davis & Callahan, 2008; Rogers, 2007), although this option has been criticized for its underrepresentation of students of color (see Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002; 2004 for a CRT/LatCrit analysis of AP course placement) and its lack of differentiated educational opportunities for gifted students (e.g. Gallagher, 2009; Plucker, 2012), primarily because AP courses also are open to students who are not identified as gifted. While the total number of gifted students who participate in AP or PreAP courses is not known, one study of a Texas high school found that more than 80% of its GT-identified juniors and seniors were enrolled in at least

one AP class during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years (D. Clark, Moore, & Slate, 2012). Clark, et al. found that more than four times as many gifted students as non-GT identified students took AP classes (D. Clark, et al., 2012).

In Westcreek, high school students are not assigned classes as they are in elementary and middle school. Rather, they enroll by selecting all their courses from the high school catalog. Likewise, gifted students are not automatically placed in classes as a result of their identification but must choose to participate in classes that are part of the array of GT program services (Westcreek Independent School District, 2010). As is shown above, those classes that are exclusive to GT students are electives. As opposed to the PreAP and AP course options, these electives are not content-based and offer GT program services based on Westcreek's "general intellectual abilities" program description. Some students, clearly, are aware of their options for GT-only courses. Several participants – Edwin, Natalie, Marifer, Derrick, and Naya – have chosen to enroll in the high school elective GT classes. But of Chase's 506 identified students in the 2011-2012 school year, only a handful chose a GT elective.

Summary: Academic Identity

Once students are identified as gifted in Westcreek, school practices separate them from other students. These practices serve to figure gifted students as smart, creative, and different from their general education peers. As gifted students move through middle school, institutional practices channel them into increasingly narrower and more exclusive paths as the program services focus more on accelerated academic performance than general intellectual ability. This change tends to affect two groups of gifted students more negatively than others: those who were identified in elementary school based on creativity, leadership, and general intellectual abilities that are not content-specific, and former ELLs who were in elementary bilingual programs.

Former elementary bilingual students lose the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in Spanish (with one exception that will be noted below) when they enter middle school. Therefore, we could predict that a gifted student who is still in the process of mastering English may be "left behind" as the academic demands of program services outpace their linguistic skills. Although they still maintain their GT identification, their participation in school practices that figure them as gifted are increasingly limited.

Más esfuerzo: Student Conceptions of Giftedness

Because identity construction is dialogic, it is also important to consider what the students thought, believed and did that affirmed their gifted academic identity – their own agency in defining their academic identity. I asked them to share their personal - in other words, internalized – definitions of giftedness. Interestingly, their responses reflected the debate in the gifted education community. Some spoke exclusively of giftedness as inherent, as "what you are." "What being gifted is" was phrased most often in comparison to others who are presumably not gifted. Most, like Christian, said that being gifted means being smart, and moreover: "I guess that we're smarter than everybody else." For Adriana, it means catching on to instruction faster than general education students do. Other students, she said, need to hear the same information several times more than she does. Adriana explained that general education students "…don't experience the same way we (gifted students) do." Mía and Edwin, in addition to intelligence, added that being highly creative and imaginative was part of being gifted.

Some students implied that giftedness is both "what you are" and "what you do": Mía talked about her "crazy" imagination, and speculated that her giftedness is related to its effect on her talent as a writer: "Writing, like...if I really start like thinking, I start imagining, you know

like, crazy stuff and I think that's what helped me get in there (be identified as gifted) in the first place."

The students also have internalized that giftedness is the result of working hard. Marifer attributes her academic success to her giftedness and the effort she has put in over the years: "Because...well, all my hard work has paid off, and paying attention, and learning everything." Joaquín notes that being academically able to take all AP and Pre-AP classes is not enough by itself: "Tengo que poner más esfuerzo para seguirle."[58] All of the students, with the exception of Mía, Adriana, and Natalie in her senior year, chose to take only PreAP and AP classes, knowing that they required an increased amount of class work and homework.

The summer between his freshman and sophomore years, Christian told me that although he passed all his freshman classes, he could do better. "I'm not gonna slack off this year," he said. "Yeah - I guess just stay focused more instead of falling asleep, and listening and texting and stuff like that." As the description of the Advanced Academics classes in Chapter Four suggested, during my observations Christian and the other students in the Advanced Academics classes were focused and generally on-task in their classrooms.

Some of the students talked about what they have gained in the GT program. Edwin thought his participation helped him learn English more quickly. Marifer compared the benefits of being in the GT program to being in general education:

> To me it's like more opportunities. Because I get to do more things, than… like that regular students do. And I think it's been very helpful. Ummm, I have learned a lot; I've learned like critical thinking, like, stuff like that, and math, and...just other things we don't learn in regular classes. …Well, it helps you, umm …I mean we also did like reading and like, thinking about it? Like...a lot more? And so I think it's helped me a lot, and also reading, and writing because it's helped me write better because I think about it in depth, so it's better now.

[58] Translation : "I have to put in more effort to keep going."

RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do these students continue to use Spanish in school after it is no longer officially a language of instruction, if at all?

During the interviews, and in Marifer's choice of the vihuela as her artifact, the participants in this study claimed a Mexican/Mexican-American cultural identity. They perceived that their ability to speak Spanish was an essential part of that identity. Using or not using Spanish at school when it is no longer a medium of instruction is one way that students negotiated this identity in middle school and beyond.

All the students in this study were able to use their fluency in Spanish to an academic advantage in middle school. Both the middle schools these students attended offered advanced Spanish electives normally only available to high school students. Both middle schools offered PreAP Spanish 3; one offered AP Spanish 4.

Even when they are taken in middle school, Spanish classes, like all International Languages classes in Westcreek, earn high school credit. The students in this study either entered high school having completed their International Languages credits, as Naya and Derrick did, or positioned to finish this requirement as freshmen, as the other students did. If they successfully completed AP Spanish 4, took the AP exam and earned a score of 3, 4, or 5, they not only earned high school credit but also guaranteed university credit if they enroll in a Texas public, post-secondary institution.

Completing high school credits in middle school also allows students a wider choice in selecting high school courses, particularly elective courses. Students who still struggle to complete basic credit requirements will not be able to schedule GT electives if they want to participate in other electives. Because she opted to take full advantage of Spanish elective classes

in middle school, Naya positioned herself to advance in other content area classes: as a sophomore in 2012-2013, she took AP US History, a junior course.

Some students have found that speaking Spanish gives them an advantage in learning academic vocabulary in English. Marifer reported that some of her high school teachers spoke Spanish and used cognates to teach new terms.

> When they're talking about a word...and the teachers say, "It sounds like this in Spanish. So what does it mean in English? What do you think it means?" Some people are like, "What?" And then I tell her, and she's like, "Yeah!" because it sounds like this word in Spanish.

She recalled that her chemistry teacher used comparisons to Spanish numbers to help students make connections to new vocabulary: "I think it was like - something about 'two' and she said, 'It sounds like 'dos', right?' She just does that. Like with numbers. 'Doesn't it sound like this in Spanish?' With 'cien' and ..."

As was elaborated in a previous section, most of the students have used their bilingual abilities at school to interpret between students, teachers and parents who do not speak one another's language. Similar language brokering is documented elsewhere in the literature on gifted Spanish-English bilinguals (Valdés, 2003). Joaquín, Marifer, Adriana, and Mía also report helping newcomers from Spanish-speaking countries understand the routines of their school.

The participants also related times when they strategically switched from English to Spanish at school for specific purposes. Code switching among bilingual individuals is a much-studied phenomenon (Cummins, 2000; Grosjean, 1998; Poplack, 1980). Previous studies have researched the functions of code switching among Spanish-speakers in particular (see Poplack above and Zentella, 1997, for example), Spanish-speakers in classrooms (I. Reyes, 2004), and among gifted Spanish speakers in school settings (Hughes, et al., 2006). Bailey's (2002) extensive study of Dominican American high school students in Rhode Island offers a

comprehensive examination of the use of code-switching among these youth. Their purposes for choosing to use English and Spanish in specific circumstances parallel those of the participants in this study.

Among balanced bilinguals (Crawford, 2004; Valdés & Figueroa, 1994), those who, like the students in this study have mastered their languages with more or less equal fluency, code switching almost always serves a contextual purpose that is "over and above what can be achieved monolingually" (Gardner-Chloros, Charles, & Cheshire, 2000). Derrick and Natalie found a less altruistic advantage to speaking a language other than English than offering their services as interpreters at school: they use Spanish to speak to their friends when they do not want others to understand what they are saying. Natalie reported that "Half the time" she spoke Spanish at school "it was so other people wouldn't understand." Derrick said, "You can make fun of people and they don't even know."

Like Wilson in Bailey's (2002) study of Dominican-American youth at Central High School, Derrick reports using Spanish in class to hold private conversations with other students:

> Well, I have friends that speak Spanish and we just always talk Spanish in class. Like in my...in my fifth period? The teacher doesn't understand Spanish so it's prety cool.

Although I did not see Derrick using Spanish in this manner, I did observe him code-switching with a Spanish-speaking substitute teacher in his Leadership class one morning for a completely different purpose. Christian and Derrick reported using Spanish strategically in high school to affiliate with and position themselves favorably with Spanish-speaking teachers. Christian said that putting in a word or two of Spanish establishes a bond between him and his teachers:

> If I have bilingual teachers, I guess I could give 'em answers; I can talk to them or make jokes like that to them in Spanish. They'll laugh or do something 'cause they understand it too… I only do it with my Mexican teachers. (Christian)

It also lets them in on the joke when others do not realize Christian is bilingual: "They think it's pretty funny the faces that people make when they know I speak Spanish."

The students all have used Spanish in school to cement affiliation with other Spanish speakers. In this way, they forefront their Mexican/Mexican-American identity:

> I thought it was so cool how if people would talk a different language I would understand it and there was kids that didn't and I just...felt like...that was a little like - bump up. (Mía)

Mía's reflection on using Spanish in this instance connects that linguistic capital to navigational capital. I coded this and similar instances, such as Natalie's statement above as both navigational and linguistic capital in the data analysis phase of this dissertation study. Using Spanish at school is one way that students negotiate an environment that is not always responsive to their academic and social needs (Yosso, 2006). It connected these students to social networks – in some cases, peers, and in others, teachers – that assisted them in mitigating the institutional challenges in the figured world of Chase High School. In using Spanish the students in this study combined linguistic, social and navigational capital to manage their identities as (a) Mexican, (b) bilingual, and (c) gifted. Zarate, Bhimiji, and Reese (2005) noted how the degree of Spanish spoken by students in their study at a California high school influenced the students' perceptions of ethnic identity. The general label "Latino" was most closely associated with someone who speaks Spanish, regardless of national origin or family background. (Tse, 2001).

2. What role does the gifted Latina/o student's cultural identity play in their experiences at school, if any?

Maintaining a bicultural identity has been positively correlated with positive self esteem and emotional well-being and enhanced flexibility in social situations for Mexican and Mexican-American youth (Domanico, Crawford, & De Wolfe, 1994) as well as a positive indicator of academic achievement (Worrell, 2007; Zarate, et al., 2005). Nonetheless, the students reported

that they were not always able to act on this biculturalism in school settings. Despite their self-identification as Mexican/Mexican-American, the students were aware of institutional pressures to choose something else. Most bubble in "Hispanic" when it is an option although Marifer objected to the term: "I don't like being 'Hispanic.' 'Hispanic' is just like a big group; it's just Spanish speakers, but I think they should put each… I am proud of being Mexican, it's my heritage and I'm proud of that." Several of the students recalled being explicitly told to indicate another ethnicity. Mía related that while she normally bubbles in "Hispanic" when she is offered choices to indicate her ethnicity on institutional forms such as applications and test documents, when she was in elementary school she was told to opt for white: "They would always tell us at school… If they didn't have Hispanic or Latino, then it would just be white." Mía does not accept a "White" identity.

Christian and Natalie, whose mother is Latina and whose father is African-American, were told as elementary school students to use their father's race. Natalie related: "…they always told me that I was African-American; so, I'm just, okay. Like whenever I would take my TAKS test and stuff? Like, when I was smaller I would ask, and they'd be like, 'Oh, you're African-American.'" While she now bubbles in "Hispanic," Christian chooses African-American, Latino, or Hispanic, randomly, depending on how he feels that day. The siblings agreed, though, that their preferred descriptor is "Blaxican. I'm a Black person and a Mexican person, " Christian explained. Natalie agreed, "Blaxican. It works for me." Romo (2008, 2011) has written that the assertion of a "Blaxican" identity defies racial stereotyping by disrupting monoracial conceptions of identity.

Mía is somewhat bothered by US-born Mexicans who do not indicate that: "When people say, 'I'm Mexican,' I'm like, 'Oh, they're from Mexico!' I say I'm Mexican because I am. There's

times that they don't believe me, though, 'You don't look like you're from Mexico' and 'You don't have an accent' but I always show them my shot[59], I'm just like, "No, I am, I'm made from there." She is not happy when some people assume that she is white, or that she does not speak Spanish. Because her elementary school implemented a form of sheltered English rather than transitional bilingual education, teachers were surprised when they learned she spoke Spanish.

If Mía's racial identity difficulties come from her light phenotype, Christian and Natalie are not presumed to be Spanish speakers because they have a more African-American phenotype. Natalie mentioned that when people observe her speaking Spanish to her sister, "They freak out." Both she and Christian have experienced other students talking about them, in from of them, in Spanish. Christian offers his first day of high school PE as an example. When a fellow student made a comment about the "negrito", Christian asked him, in Spanish, to repeat what he said. "They were just like, 'HOW DO YOU KNOW SPANISH?'"

In some instances, students themselves labeled similar incidents racism. Natalie related an experience she had in second grade with her new GT teacher, a Latina. It became obvious that she was treating Natalie and her older sister, who was also in the GT program, inequitably. Apparently the story is well known among the family, as Christian asked, "Is that the one who Mami had to go straighten out?" as the sisters retold the incident.

But the majority of the instances the students described as racism came from other Latina/o students, like the incident Christian experienced in high school gym. Marifer recalled that the time a kindergarten classmate called her a wetback has stuck with her, because it upset her to be presumed "illegal." One of Mía's classmates continually told her to go back to Mexico, and that since she was in "America," she should speak English. Natalie made reference to an

[59] When children in Mexico get immunizations, the injection site is the upper arm; in the US children are typically vaccinated on the thigh.

uncomfortable moment in second grade when her classmates made comments when they were learning about Martin Luther King. “Like, everybody thought that I was like, totally different. I guess, but, my...my teacher taught them that it doesn't have to do with your skin tone or anything, it has to do with the person, and how they were brought up.”

As Marifer commented, “I know that being Mexican you get discriminated against, things like that.” “But,” she added, “...I am proud of being Mexican, it's my heritage and I'm proud of that.” Her comment typified the participants’ acknowledgement that discrimination and racial acts at school are a part of being Mexican/Mexican-American/Blaxican. Marifer’s comment is also typical in that it demonstrates the students’ resilient insistence on their cultural identity in the face of these acts.

3. What contradictions or complementarities do the participants experience between their cultural, linguistic, and academic identities?

The students did not report receiving any messages that being Mexican/Spanish-speaking was incompatible with being smart and gifted. On the contrary: they felt that their academic and linguistic identities complemented one another. Naya implied a “bilingual advantage” when she noted that her bilingual class was the smartest class in their grade level. All the students gained academic advantage by taking Spanish for high school credit when they were in middle school. Every student believed that their bilingualism would improve their future employment opportunities.

What is clear is that their primary identity in school is related to how they are positioned academically: being smart is their primary identity in high school, not being bilingual or Mexican. The gifted identity they took on in elementary school “thickened” (Bartlett, 2007a) through their experiences and through institutional practices around “giftedness” discussed previously. In time, this identity overshadowed their identity as the “bilingual kids” (again, partially enacted by institutional practices that eliminated Spanish-language content instruction

and transitioned them into English-only classrooms). In addition, because Chase is a school where, as Derrick said, "Everybody here is basically Hispanic…"[60] a Mexican/Mexican-American identity, while important, is not as salient on a day-to-day basis as being smart.

The students had mixed opinions on how well their culture was represented in schools. Most, by their own reports, know little of Mexican history, and accept that as a given since they were educated in Texas. Once, however, Marifer's additional cultural knowledge brought her at odds with her freshman World Geography teacher. During a lesson on the Treaty of Guadalupe, Marifer questioned something her teacher said. "I can remember what I had learned before - it was like the opposite; they were making the Mexicans look like the bad guys." Although she knew she was right, Marifer backed off when the teacher told her she was wrong because: "She (the teacher) was mean! She was mean to everyone! And she was always yelling at everybody."

Nonetheless, one of her favorite memories from elementary school was a third-grade activity where each classroom was designed to represent a different country. Marifer recalled being happy that she could connect to the activities and the teacher whose room represented Mexico. She remembered that the teacher had a small piñata suspended from the ceiling and Marifer described her dress and the flowers in her hair as "folklórico".

A similar experience had the opposite effect on Mía. "When they used to do Fiesta at school, I was like, "This doesn't feel like Mexico! Everybody thinks that once you get to Mexico it's just like, big skirts and sombreros this huge" (she gestures) and people dancing, and … it's not. It's not! So like they would ask me, "Oh, did you used to wear that?" I'm just like, "No, it was like - normal. I would wear jeans and a shirt."

[60] Derrick made this comment during the second interview. When he paused without finishing his thought I asked him, "So it doesn't make a difference?" He answered, "Yeah."

Still, students felt more culturally connected to the school community during their elementary years. Adriana recalled that: "Hicimos muchos proyectos y era mucho de...culturas que yo no conocía."[61] Joaquín's comment was typical of their opinions:

> They talk about a lot of Hispanic culture in elementary, but I think the higher up you go, the more it gets more about, getting to work, because it's...you had a little more time when you were small. (Now) They're just trying to get you to finish.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

While the construct of figured worlds allows people to recognize their "ability to craft" who they are, it simultaneously considers the dialogic influences of power and structural constraints (Cuero, 2009). Some school practices and policies, for example those regarding attendance, impose structural constraints on all students at Chase. The RFID chip in the school ID tags gives Chase administrators the ability to know where any student is on campus at any time. Therefore, all Chase students are under constant surveillance, whether they have attendance problems or not. The only way to avoid this surveillance is to avoid wearing the RFID, which is a violation of school rules (Westcreek Independent School District, 2012). The reason Chase and Westcreek administrators cite most often for the RFID program is its potential positive impact on state funding tied to student attendance. Although the Westcreek administration has acknowledged the RFID's potential contribution to student safety it is almost always a secondary consideration. Students are aware of this emphasis. I overheard this exchange between two students in the GT Independent Study class about the RFID cards: "They only do it (check the RFID) during second period," one student said. "Yeah – the money period," another student added.

I use the discourse around student attendance at Chase as an example of how the school and district position the students and the school community in this figured world. Within figured

[61] Translation: "We did a lot of projects and there was a lot about cultures I wasn't familiar with."

worlds, individuals also come to understand their ability to craft their future participation, or agency (Urrieta, 2007b) through artifacts, practices, and labels. The RFID tag is an artifact, as are discourses about its use and why it is needed. It figures all Chase students as in need of surveillance. It positions them as potential law breakers. That it was used at only two schools – the other is one of Chase's feeder middle schools – reveals that the district views these schools as in need of improvement, in deficit. According to this view, the students at Chase have an attendance problem. Their poor attendance costs the district money. In fact, Chase has not had the worst attendance record among Westcreek's high schools for a number of years. The school with the most serious attendance issue is in a more affluent neighborhood, and fewer of its students are poor and brown. Because Chase is poor and brown, no one questioned the school board when it positioned Chase as in need of improvement by choosing it to be as one of the pilot schools.

Other artifacts of Chase's attendance policy include documents on its website. The explanation of how to read the "Parent Conference Report" (see Appendix I) directs the parent's attention to the attendance areas. No mention is made of student grades. Chase's policies on attendance and student ID tags are among the few documents on the school website that are available in Spanish and English. In contrast, the information on the "Family Involvement Program" page is only in English (Westcreek Independent School District, 2013).

The school administration rewards students for wearing the RFID. Among the announcements of tryouts for the softball team, fundraising efforts, and history and science fair prize winners on Chase's closed-circuit television loop are photographs of entire classrooms of students displaying their RFID tags. These students are also potential prize winners: when everyone in the class has their RFID, the teacher calls an administrator to take a picture of the

class to document their compliance. The class is then entered into a drawing for a pizza or ice cream party. Of the 12 or 15 classrooms featured on the loop one week, only two were not GT, Pre-AP, or AP. Even within a policy that applies to all students, the "two Chases" – the one attended by general education students, and the one attended by students in the Advanced Academics program – are visible. Could it be that the advanced academics classes are more compliant with school rules? Rubin (2007) observed how smartness is positioned with compliance in her study of student identity in one urban high school. Ironically, what is missing from Chase's emphasis on the state compulsory attendance law is its potential connection to academic success.

USING COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH

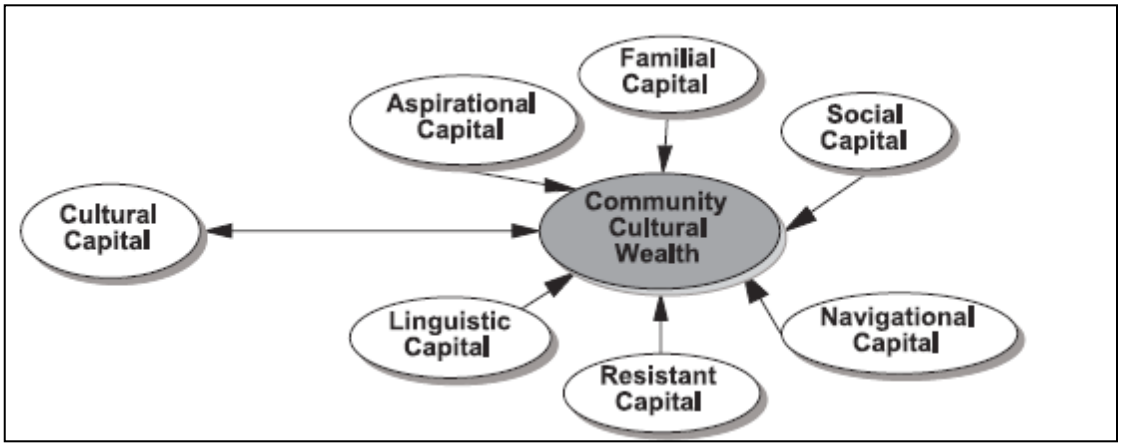


Figure 5.1. Yosso's Model of Community Cultural Wealth. From "Whose Culture Has Capital?" A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005).

The participants in this study use their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006) to negotiate the paradox of their bilingual and gifted identities in the figured world of Chase High School.

Yosso's model of community cultural wealth contests the notion that Chicana/o school failure is based on their lack of mainstream cultural capital. As the model shows, students may draw on six forms of capital to negotiate schools. As I mentioned in the methodology section, I used Yosso's model of community cultural wealth and the six forms or domains of capital – linguistic, familial, aspirational, social, navigational, and resistant – in the final Axial Coding stage on my data analysis. I theorize that in this study, the focal students must at times draw on forms of capital to negotiate the polarized paradox of their identities. Below I provide examples of how the students use each of these forms of capital at school.

Linguistic Capital

All the students are native Spanish speakers and have become fluent English speakers as well. In the Axial Coding phase of my data analysis, I coded as linguistic capital instances where this bilingualism was institutionally encouraged (such as Christian's recollection of his third grade teacher's desire that the students use Spanish in the classroom and English in common areas of the school, to give them an opportunity to speak both languages) and when students either demonstrated their ability (recall Derrick's code-switching with the Spanish-speaking substitute teacher) or commented on its use (such as Mía's pride in helping a stranger with directions at a gas station). This bilingual ability gives them the linguistic flexibility in their communities, in their families, and in their schools. As competent interpreters, they assist their parents, their teachers, their classmates, and their neighbors to navigate their community. Linguistic capital, then, connects to and supports navigational capital as well.

The students realize that the ability to speak more than one language expands their potential networks. It gives them the opportunity to communicate with twice as many people.

Further, they recognize that this linguistic capital will likely be an asset in their future careers. In that way, linguistic capital connects to aspirational capital.

They also recognize that bilingual ability is linguistic capital they can use strategically. Natalie and others speak Spanish, for example, to maintain private conversations with their peers. Christian and Derrick use Spanish as a tool to affiliate themselves with Latina/o teachers, which positions them for favorable treatment. This strategic use of Spanish recalls the finding in Hughes et al. (2006) that gifted students not only know when it is appropriate to code-switch, but use it to manipulate and mitigate the social discontinuities between home and school culture.

Their bilingualism has gained them academic credit, which they may use as social capital in the figured world of school. Because they did not lose their Spanish in transitioning to English instruction, it has gained them high school credit toward graduation and, in some cases, free university credit they can use in college. They also use Spanish when approaching unfamiliar vocabulary in English.

Naya found that her knowledge of Spanish at times gives her comic relief in class:

> Or like when I see a Spanish word, and my teacher pronounces it wrong, and I'm like, "Oh, no! You said that wrong." I just find it funny, 'cause they're trying to talk Spanish and I'm just like - "You said that wrong!"

The ability to speak Spanish reinforces their cultural identity as Mexican/ Mexican-American. Their bilingualism is a visible marker of their bicultural identity. It is also an important part of their identity as active members of their families. Mía reported that she is often called upon to translate letters for her parents that are in English. Orellana (R. A. Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco, & Carbone, 2008; Orellana, 2009; Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner, & Meza, 2003) has written extensively about this language brokering within immigrant families. Bilingualism as linguistic capital, then, is also connected to familial capital.

Recall that Mía is the student who identified herself as a creative writer. Her bilingualism – and its connection to familial capital – has been a source of both humor and frustration when she composes narratives about her family life for school assignments. She related how she makes a stylistic choice to include code-switches in her writing to convey authenticity and tone:

> Or like when I write, and there's stuff like - when they talk? - and I have to write it in Spanish. And they (teachers) are like, "What is this? You can't write it in a different language. (hh) We need to understand or we won't give you a grade." But like other than that - yeah, I use it at school too. When I talk about family, like my mom getting mad or something, or my mom saying something, I quote it? "Te dije, niña" or "No, m'ija, don't do that" pero, in Spanish. (Teachers say) come on, we understand it was in Spanish, but I need to understand it and I need to read it. So I have to change it or ...(Mía)

Familial Capital

The students agreed that their families are proud of and support their academic achievements. Because a question in the first interview protocol (see Appendix A) specifically asked the students to comment on their families' feelings about their participation in the GT programs, a number of these responses were eventually coded as familial capital, and, also as aspirational capital. Naya reported that her parents tell other relatives, "'They're in gifted and talented.' They love to brag about it." Marifer recalled her mother's reaction when she gave her the envelope that contained the results of her testing:

> So I gave it to her, and she was reading it and she was like, "Oh my God!", and I jumped back, you know, I got... I was so scared! And then she was all happy; she told my grandparents, you know, Hispanic families? You know how they are.

Those responses coded as references to their families revealed support, encouragement, humor and guidance, and in this regard were similar to findings reported previously by Valencia (Valencia, 2011; Valencia & Black, 2002) among others. Adriana's mother encouraged her to work and study hard to pass her ninth grade English writing test. Joaquín said his parents, "Siempre me dicen que trate lo mejor que pueda y trate de agarrar las clases mejores que

pueda."[62] With the exception of some of Natalie's remarks about her siblings ("I told her (sister) to help me but she wouldn't. J____, I asked you to help me and you did not help me." Christian: "She (J___) did it by herself; why couldn't you?" Natalie: "She's smarter than me"), the participants reported no instances where their families could be considered discouraging of or even indifferent to their academic success at school. Indeed, after the previous exchange between Natalie, Christian and their older sister, the sister affirmed that Natalie was indeed smart – but lazy. Natalie then admitted that her priorities with regard to school had changed during her senior year.

In fact, the data reflected an absence of negative family interaction. In all instances the students reported nothing other than loving guidance. They frequently referenced the consejos they get from their families. These "pedagogies of the home" (Delgado Bernal, 2001), most frequently attributed to mothers, are reported in the literature (Cervantes, 2002; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Valdés, 1996) to provide children in Mexican-American families instruction in the moral code by which they become competent, productive participants in their communities and learners in schools (Kiyama, 2010). Children use these consejos as a form of knowledge production (Delgado Bernal, 2002) and in the construction of their cultural identities (Elenes, Gonzalez, Bernal, & Villenas, 2001). Mía shared that one of her mother's consejos helps her remain tied to her cultural and linguistic roots:

> I know that if I would ever just like forget my Spanish my mom would just be like, "Okay, we moved over here and now you're trying to be conceited" or like once I go over there (to Mexico) , like, I don't wanna forget my Spanish; I can keep talking to my parents, my grandparents and stuff .

Familial capital extends beyond consejos. All the students have close extended family connections. These connections nurture them through tradition and provide additional support for

[62] "They always tell me to try my hardest and try to take the best classes I can."

their working parents in taking them to practices and caring for them during school vacations. These times with extended family give them new knowledge and skills that would not be available in their home communities. For example, Marifer's aunt nurtured her love of music by giving her a guitar from Morelia. Mía has helped her grandfather grow chiles on his "terreno" in Mexico, and had the opportunity to play Little League baseball during a summer she spent in Houston with her aunt. One way Mía's grandmother lets her know she is loved and treasured is by keeping all the trinkets and gifts she gets from the grandchildren.

> My grandma keeps everything. She's not a hoarder, but everything that we give her, she'll just have it in her house. I think I gave her, when I was little, a little box - but I colored the little box - and she still has it, she's like "I put my earrings in here," and I said, "Grandma, you still have that? Why? that was so ugly!" And she still keeps it. If you give her a necklace, a bead! - she'll keep it.

These examples of familial capital are inextricably connected to the concept of educación (see, among others, N. González, 2001; N. González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Valdés, 1996). Educación is not what students learn in school. It is what Latina/o students learn in their homes. Educación is what Naya referenced when she spoke of the respect her parents teach them at home, a way of being they brought with them from Mexico that she does not see among most US-born Latinas/os. There was abundant evidence that these students were "bien educados" in the ways they welcomed me into their homes. Christian knew that he was expected to take me to greet his grandfather. Adriana, Natalie, Mía, and Marifer shook my hand, offered me water, and as we came to know one another better, greeted and took leave with the abrazo I merited as an educator and older acquaintance. Marifer told me that before she left, "My mom, she wanted me to clean, she's like, 'You better clean!' And I was like, 'I know! I know already!'" It would be unseemly to welcome a guest into an untidy house; Marifer knows this by example. Educación is

a form of familial capital that connects to social capital because it teaches children how to be competent members of their communities.

Nonetheless, parental caring – familial capital – is not enough (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999) to insure that Latina/o students are successful US schools. The students commented on the consejos their parents gave them that related to their future. These consejos provide them aspirational capital.

Aspirational Capital

Yosso defines aspirational capital as "the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" (Yosso, 2005, p. 81; see alsoYosso, 2006). This study examined the phenomenon of gifted, bilingual students – a paradox given the State of Texas labeled them as elementary students to be at risk of failure because of the perceived barrier their Spanish dominance presented to their academic achievement. In addition, these students faced some very real barriers: low family income, a pressure toward premarital sex reflected in the higher than average rate of teenage parenting in their neighborhood (M. Martínez & Aguilar, 2012), and a secondary school experience that was, in many ways, less than responsive to their academic and linguistic needs. Nonetheless, all the students reported that their parents maintain high aspirations for their futures. Edwin's answer was typical of the other students' responses: "They want me to go to college. They told me that I could do whatever I want, as long as I go to college." During our first interview, Joaquín noted that his parents have similar expectations of him, that they want him to go to college: "A lo mejor ir a Princeton, Harvard…" Comments he made during our second interview showed that those expectations have influenced his own actions and aspirations: "Well, I've been thinking about getting into...I've been thinking about a college and what I want to get into. Because I've been putting some thought intot it and I'm pretty

sure I want to get into political science. … Because I'm really interested in how politics run - I did some community service with a group, the Northwest Democrats, I did a lot of walks with them and I helped them out over the election. … So I've been starting to work a little harder in my classes."

Although Marifer had attended a college fair she was invited to because of her scholastic achievement, she hadn't settled on where to apply until her GT Independent Study class. During one of our summer interviews she was trying to decide if she should apply to Cornell or Columbia. After researching colleges and completing her Independent Study project, she selected Columbia, because they offer a psychology program that specializes in her interests. She also learned that admission to Barnard College would allow her to take courses at Columbia. "I'm thinking of that one, since it's an all-women's college. I think it would be better for me. Less distractions."

Although Mía considers entering the military as one of her post-high school options, her mother wants her to go to college.

> My mom always sees us like being doctors, and she's always talking about, "I want to talk to people and be like, 'Oh yeah, my daughter's in Paris right now, and like, my daughter's over here; she wants to talk so highly of us, and then whenever I said I wanted to go into the miltary, she was always like, "Well, why not college?" and "Why don't you try to do something else?" … I don't know; she just wants the best for us…My dad's always talking about how he wants us to get like a high-paying job and do good for our family once we start it....

Derrick's family's aspirations' are much more specific: he says his family wants him to be an anesthesiologist, a desire he shares. "They back me,' he says. Because his uncle is an anesthesiologist in Mexico, Derrick has reasonable expectations of what it takes to reach that level and is confident that he can achieve it: "Altogether, I should be out of everything when I'm

30. Four years of undergraduate and then four years of graduate - it's medical school - and then - I think that's right, and then anesthesiologist school for like two years, something like that."

Naya acknowledged that her drive to earn high grades has had an effect on her family. "And so now, that's what they expect from me? And it's harder now? But they're always like, 'You can always do better, Naya.'" Her parents want her to go to college. "And they know I'm a smart girl, and I always told them I either wanted to be a doctor or a psychiatrist? So they expect me to succeed." For the moment, she is interested in studying child psychology. "I really like kids, little kids? Which is why the Sandy Hook[63] thing really hit me hard. Because when I grow up I wanna be like a psychologist and work with little kids?"

Natalie's family expectations also include college. Mr. Garza's pride was evident when he told me about Natalie and Christian's older sister's scholarship and enrollment in a university, after graduating early from high school. Natalie reported:

> My grandparents? Um...they <u>really</u> want me to go to college, like NOW. And become whatever I want to be so I can...so I won't have to struggle later. Which makes sense.

One student has considered the effect of early parenthood on aspirational capital. With large eyes and a suddenly serious expression, Mía spoke briefly about one of her best friends from elementary school – one of my former GT students – who had a baby at the end of their freshman year of high school. Recalling how she, this friend, and the friend's cousin – Mía's close friend M____– used to go to GT together and do "crazy things" together, she spoke in awe of how being a parent has changed her friend: "Anna wants to do the best for her kid, and she matured so much." She continued:

[63] Naya was referring to the December 2012 shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut that took the lives of 20 first graders as well as six adults.

> She's so mature, now, way mature." She jokes around every once in a while, but it's just like, "My baby this, and my baby that." We tell her, "You matured so much!" And she's like, "I kinda have to." It does...I'm just like, wow, babies change a lot.

Understanding the impact having a child has on your aspirations is especially important at Chase. Information from the Westcreek District's Teen Pregnancy program shows that 25% of its participants come from Chase High School (Teen Parenting Program, 2012). This rate has remained constant over the program's 25-year history. I saw several visibly pregnant young women during my on-campus observations. Indeed, the teen pregnancy rate in the zip codes including and surrounding Chase is three times higher than the national average (M. Martínez & Aguilar, 2012). As of this writing, none of the participants is a parent, although most of the students made reference to their future families. It is not clear if they have made a conscious effort to avoid sex or pregnancy since I did not discuss the issue of teenage parenting with any participant other than Mía. What is clear, though, is that having a child while still in high school is not a part of the participants' and their families' aspirations for their futures.

One noteworthy finding in this study is the presence of intergenerational aspirational capital. Most of the literature on familiar capital centers on practices that occur within students' immediate families – i.e. parents to children. Several participants in this study mentioned the influence of extended family members on their expectations and hopes for the future. Derrick's desire to become an anesthesiologist is influenced, in part, by an uncle in Mexico. Marifer acknowledged that although she plans to study psychology, her grandparents want her to go to law school. Natalie and Christian spoke emphatically about their grandparents' plans for their college careers. This intergenerational aspirational capital is, of course, connected to familial capital as well.

Social Capital

Yosso refers to social capital as "networks of people and community resources" (Yosso, 2006) and notes that historically, people of color have used their social capital to gain, among other things, educational opportunity (Yosso, 2005). For the students in this study, being identified as gifted has served as social capital in navigating school. Certainly, their identification as gifted gained the students in this study the presumption of academic capability and intelligence, or as Naya described it, a "rep" among their teachers: "Like all the teachers were like, 'Oh, she's gifted and talented, she's a good kid.'" This reputation extends to gifted kids even when they are in general education classes. Adriana notes that even though the other students in her general education classes don't know she is identified as gifted, her teachers do, and "They expect more of me; they push me. They tell me I should be taking AP and PreAP classes."

Being in the GT program provides gifted students access to resources that students in general education do not have. In the Leadership class, for example, students receive both general and targeted vocabulary preparation for the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT, generally referred to as simply the PSAT) test they will take as juniors. In addition to the PSAT vocabulary preparation required by the curriculum, students are expected to self-select vocabulary with which they are unfamiliar to prepare themselves for the test. These "personal" vocabulary words are displayed around the classroom and are therefore available for constant review. Such preparation positions students to perform well on this important test which not only provides practice for the SAT (one of the national standardized tests many colleges and universities require that students take as a consideration for admission)

but also determines which students will be awarded college scholarships sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (The College Board, 2013).

As the students, like Marifer, who take the Independent Study Mentorship class research and discuss colleges to complete the College Comparison Chart assignment (Appendix G) they gain an understanding of the ways of a "college-going community" (Liou, Antrop-González, & Cooper, 2009). Students not only research colleges but receive in-class help to complete college applications. They acquire vocabulary and knowledge that is largely unavailable to students in the general education classroom and unknown to families who do not have prior experience with post-secondary education. For example, in one observation I made of Marifer in her Mentorship class, she discussed the merits of several colleges she was considering with a classmate, commenting on how she found the traditions of Texas A&M attractive. This exchange was noteworthy not only for its content but because the assignment directs students to investigate the traditions of the colleges they are researching. As a result students learn that there is more to considering a post-secondary educational institution than the academic opportunities it offers – something that might not be apparent to students who are first-generation college attendees.

Dual credit and AP classes offer the possibility of earning college credit while in high school – without having to pay tuition. Students who take full advantage of these opportunities can enter college having earned enough credits to begin as sophomores (Callahan, 2003). This not only offers students a significant savings of time and money but allows them greater access to upper-level coursework upon matriculation.

The labels "STEMM," "GT", and "Advanced Academics" confer not only academic privilege on students at Chase but also instructional independence. In a previous section I mentioned that students in these programs benefit from the trust of their teachers. Not having to

negotiate use of the restroom pass, for example, has benefits in real time: when teachers do not have to spend time answering and managing students' requests to use the restroom (or go to the library or see a counselor), instructional time and the teacher's availability to other students for academic purposes are not interrupted.

Other forms of social capital have helped these students navigate school. One of Mía's fondest memories in kindergarten is when her teacher would ask her to sing Paulina Rubio songs in front of the class: "And he loved it, and I was always just like... I had a horrible voice (laughing) so like I would sing it and he would just like look at me like, like all the excitement that the kids had." At that time, Mía's family had recently moved to the US from Coahuila. Although Mía's singing in Spanish could also be considered evidence of using her linguistic capital at school, asking her to sing popular music to the class in Spanish was one way her teacher helped to make her feel comfortable in an unfamiliar environment.

The social capital students gain via their participation in the GT program extends into the community. According to J.R. Martínez, the former director of Bilingual/ESL Programs in Westcreek, the changes the district has made in identifying and serving gifted bilingual education students in elementary schools has become a topic of discussion at parent training sessions. His assertion that, "I hear several of them: 'Pues, m'ija está en el programa de dotados y talentosos. Y quiero que sepan todas'"[64] brings to mind Naya's comment that her family "brags" about their daughters' academic accomplishments. According to Martínez, the community has seen their children identified for the GT program and "…you know how comadres are..." He offered an example of a typical exchange:

> 'Pues, fíjese que le hicieron un examen a Junior. Y salió con muy buenas calificaciones, y ahora le están dando este...un programa diferente de ...como..talentosos? ¿Y su hija?'

64 "Well, my daughter is in the gifted and talented program and I want everyone to know it!"

> 'No, pos, fíjese que no, que mi hija...¿ y cómo le hizo, comadre, eh?'[65] So those kinds of things - word of mouth - because I know when I do training with our bilingual parents, when I do training with the Even Start mothers, those are the kinds of things they brag about.

This "word of mouth" networking between comadres gives families valuable navigational information about seeking important academic services for their own children.

Navigational Capital

Students whose older siblings and relatives have attended Chase have used those prior students' experiences to guide them through high school. Here, again, we have an example of how different forms of capital overlap – because such information is provided by family members, this advice could also be considered familial capital, and because it involves using social networks to gain information about accessing resources from institutions, it could be considered social capital. Yosso's use of navigational capital speaks specifically to information that allows Chicana/o students to navigate educational institutions that were created without considering their particular needs (Yosso, 2006). For example, Marifer registered for all AP classes in addition to GT Independent Study, but heeded the advice of former STEMM and Chase students not to take too heavy a load. She decided to take PreAP instead of AP Physics, knowing that she would put less effort into a class that did not interest her very much. She used this navigational knowledge to manage the requirement while allowing her more time for other classes and her extracurricular activities.

Navigational capital also comes in the consejos students offer one another. I treated one focus group to breakfast one morning; when I came back from paying the bill Natalie was advising Naya to finish high school early if she could. "I wish I had," she told her. "Your friends

[65] "Well, you know, they gave Junior a test. And he came out with really high scores, and now they're giving him a different program …like for talented kids? And your daughter?" "Well, no, my daughter…how did you go about doing this, comadre?"

are always going to be there – or they won't. That year won't make a difference with them, and you'll be that much further ahead."

Resistant Capital

As Figure 5.2. shows, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) define four types of Chicana/o[66] student resistance, depending upon the degree and combination of the student's awareness of the conditions of her/his oppression and motivation for a social justice remedy: *reactionary behavior*, where a student "acts out" within a school setting without a critique of the oppression; *self-defeating resistance*, where the student's defiance may indeed be in reaction to her/his marginalization but lacks grounding in a social justice remedy; *conformist resistance*, exhibited by students who recognize the need for social justice but strive to achieve it by conforming to the existing social system; and finally, *transformational resistance*, where students demonstrate both a critique of the existing system and a desire for social justice. Yosso (2000, as cited in Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) described these latter students as attempting to "prove others wrong" about the negative images of Chicanas/os in educational systems. The actions of these students are motivated by a social justice perspective rooted in their own family and personal histories.

[66] In this context I use the authors' preferred label.

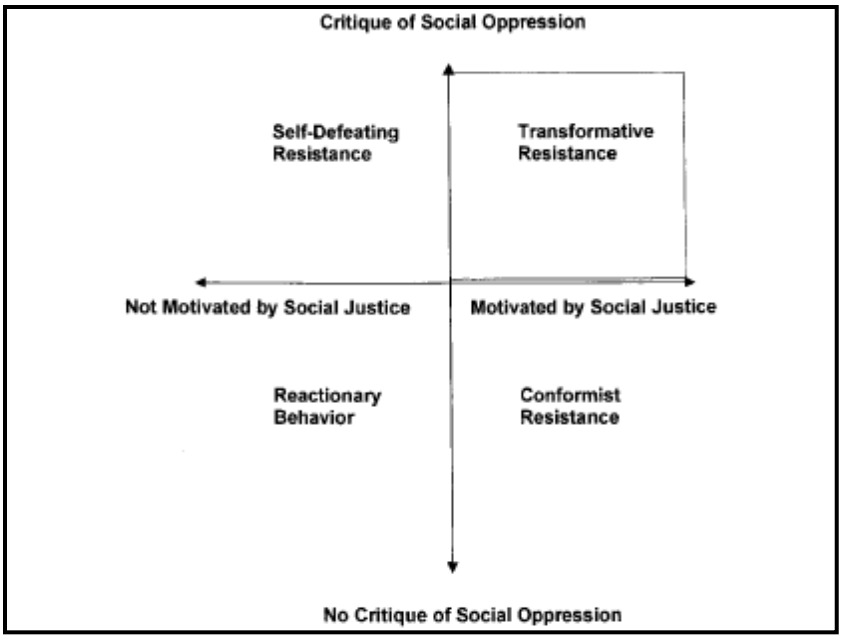


Figure 5.2 Forms of Resistance. From Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory and framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. Urban Education, 36(3), 308-342.

The participants in this study, rather, exhibited resistant capital that more closely resembles conformist resistance. With the exception of Joaquín, whose volunteer work with the Democratic Party in recent elections was motivated by his support of President Obama's economic policies ("I think he was doing a good job with the jobs, bringing up new jobs and trying to fix our economy, but those kind of things take time. A lot of time"), the participants did not draw parallels between their political opinions and their actions that would indicate transformational resistance. Even Joaquín's social action falls within the existing social structures Solórzano and Delgado Bernal associate with conformist resistance (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). On the other hand, the participants did not engage in behavior that was reactionary or self-defeating (with the possible exception of some of Mía's choices in her English class). Despite the fact that it is no longer a medium of instruction, they continue to use

Spanish both in school and at home. Suárez (2002) has proposed that maintaining bilingualism in an environment that values English monolingualism could be viewed as resistant.

That said, the participants' behaviors do not fit completely within the conformist resistance description. While it is true that they do not propose changes within the structures of their schools to mitigate the microaggressions and social and linguistic injustices they themselves identified, neither do they hold themselves, their families or their communities responsible these for negative social conditions. While Marifer chose not to correct her history teacher's inaccurate portrayal of Mexican/US historical relations, neither did she doubt her own knowledge. Although Naya does not correct her teachers' Spanish mispronunciations, she does not conform to their ways of saying the Spanish words she comes across in class, choosing instead to retain their authentic pronunciation. I observed her providing assistance to the other students in her Algebra class. This work within the confines of the existing classroom social order demonstrates a decision that is not motivated out of self-gain but may, as noted earlier, be an example both of her notion of respeto and an example of her leadership style as a gifted Mexicana. The students in this study did not feel the need to alter their cultural and linguistic identities in order to conform to an academic identity that is not inclusive of Mexican/Mexican-American Spanish speakers. In their choice of language and artifacts (especially Marifer's artifact, which was arguably the most culturally connected) these students repeatedly demonstrated their decision to be culturally Mexican/Mexican-American, linguistically bilingual Spanish/English speakers, and academically gifted – a "both/and" orientation rather than an "either/or" orientation, albeit within the existing social structure of Chase High School.

Edwin commented on his resilience, which could conflate with resistance:

> Well, one of my strengths, I don't really care about what other people say. And like, subjects like Math and stuff...and...another strength, it's like, I don't give up easy, so...yeah...I keep goin'. (Edwin)

SUMMARY

"So long as I am in existence, I am in a particular place, and must respond to all these stimuli either by ignoring them or in a response that takes the form of making sense, of producing – for it is a form of work – *meaning* out of such utterances." (Holquist, 1990, p. 47; emphasis in the original).

The quote above speaks to the dialogic nature of identity making. Holquist acknowledges that identity – which he calls "existence" – is an event, an event that is ever-changing in response to stimuli from one's surroundings. In the passage that precedes this quote Holquist describes how existence is addressed to him in "a riot of inchoate potential messages" that he must actively accept, reject or modify. Some of these messages are actual words. Others come as "primitive psychological stimuli," social practices, or ideologies. Whatever their form, Holquist recognizes that individuals react and respond to these stimuli, and in doing so, make meaning of their existence. The process is ongoing. It is work, it is active, it is agentive. It is how we come to make sense of ourselves in the world.

Questions of identity in figured worlds with regard to schools position students as agents within a "space of authoring" (Holland, et al., 1998); in other words, as authors of themselves, even as they are authored by others. As shown in previous sections, practices at Chase figure general education and Advanced Academics students dichotomously. While the students in this study have internalized those positions to varying degrees, they have also rejected some of the available identities, like monolingual English speaker, occasioned by institutional practices in Westcreek. Instead, these students have used community cultural wealth as forms of capital to negotiate a figured world that has not been designed to allow them to reach their full potential.

I do not conceptualize students' use of these forms of capital in isolation from one another. In other words, they are not like arrows in a quiver that students select to confront assaults to their identities. Rather, the students braid (Godinez, 2006) aspirational, familial, navigational, resistant, social and linguistic capital into practices for negotiating the paradoxes they face. Their use of community cultural wealth, when combined with the social capital they gain through their status as gifted students, permits them to exercise agency within the figured world without losing their identity as bilingual Mexicans/Mexican-Americans. In much the same way mountaineers use climbing ropes both to anchor themselves firmly as well as to ascend peaks, the rope – mecate, if you will – these different forms of capital provide allows these students to move successfully through this figured world still anchored in their identity.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand how one group of gifted, bilingual Mexican/Mexican-American students negotiated what appeared to be paradoxes in their academic, cultural, and linguistic identities in the figured world of public high school in a major south central Texas city. Data were collected from individual and group interviews, classroom observations, observations in the field, personal artifacts, classroom artifacts, state, district and school official records, and descriptive statistics such as Census data. These data were coded, categorized and themed, using the software program NVivo, to answer the research questions.

REFLECTIONS ON METHODOLOGY

For this phenomenological study I used two theoretical lenses, Critical Race Theory/ LatCrit and Figured Worlds (Holland, et al., 1998), to provide insight on how one group of high school students negotiated their bilingual, bicultural, and gifted identities. The choice of phenomenology was purposeful not only because of precedent in other multicultural and gifted education investigations, but because I thought its emphasis on bracketing, analytical memoeing, and focus on the data helped me as a researcher to avoid premature conclusions. This was acutely necessary, I felt, because of my positionality.

Phenomenology and Positionality

Shortly after I began my doctoral studies I discovered that CRT and LatCrit theory, used in education, resonated with me as a mixed race woman and bilingual educator. I realized as I began this dissertation that I had chosen to study a phenomenon to which I was closely connected both personally and professionally. But I also was very aware that this study was about the students' experiences. I could not report those experiences through my lens. The

bracketing and memoing characteristic of a phenomenological methodology helped me to separate my own reactions to the data from those of the participants. Throughout the data collection and initial analysis period of the investigation, I kept constant analytical memos to bracket myself and maintain distance from the data. Phenomenology helped me to let the data speak first, to analyze later, and to enter the analysis phase without preconceived notions of what I would seek or find.

Once the data analysis was complete, I struggled with the question of how best to report my findings. I turned to my theoretical lenses, which are both analytical and methodological tools, as a guide. The narrative voice of color is essential to CRT/LatCrit methodology, and as such I chose to craft the counternarrative of Chase High School in Chapter Four. Indeed, all the findings are reported in a narrative style uncharacteristic of typical phenomenological investigations but central to the CRT/LatCrit theoretical and methodological orientation. The bracketing that rigorous application of phenomenological methodology demands was essential to me as a researcher so close to the subject matter, an "outsider within" (P. H. Collins, 1999) so influenced by CRT. How CRT/LatCrit and Figured Worlds served together as my theoretical lenses is discussed in the next section.

CRT/LatCrit and Figured Worlds

The CRT/LatCri and Figured Worlds theoretical lenses complemented one another. First, both CRT/LatCrit and the concept of Figured Worlds privilege the voices of participants. The use of CRT in this dissertation study foregrounded the particular voices of students of color; LatCrit focused attention on the issues of immigration status, border crossing (both figurative and literal), language, skin color and national origin salient in the lives of Latinas/os in the United States. In a world that is ruled by the majority, these perspectives are frequently lost. In

fact, CRT/LatCrit perspectives reveal how rule by majority is a subterfuge for maintaining the power of white privilege.

The notion of figured worlds is meant to focus attention on how practices that we come to see as natural are in fact socially constructed. Here is a simple example: it would be considered unseemly, if not patently unsanitary, to forcefully exhale over the desserts one plans to serve invited guests. Yet this gesture is perfectly acceptable – even expected – when one is celebrating a birthday. Blowing out the candles on a soon-to-be served cake is a social practice which in any other context would be figured as rude.

Combining the notion of social practice in figured worlds with the focus on race and power of CRT/LatCrit made it more straightforward for me, as a researcher, to problematize notions like the "at-risk" construct, which categorizes four-year-old ELLs as potential high school dropouts because they are not proficient English speakers. Because the goal of research – in particular, qualitative research such as this study – is to analyze the phenomenon at hand so as to make "the familiar strange and the strange familiar," the notion of figured worlds reveals the fallacies behind that which we come to take for granted. While CRT/LatCrit provides the rationale for *why* institutions are socially constructed to favor the white, mainstream power structure, the figured world notion reveals *how* institutional power translates into practices which marginalize students of color, and, in this particular context, Spanish-speaking, low income, academically gifted, Mexican/Mexican-American students.

Yet these theoretical lenses also allowed me to see the agency these students used to contest such marginalizing practices. The narratives of these students, to paraphrase Yosso (2006), represent "counterstories along the "Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline" (Yosso, 2006, p. 3). As has been noted previously, these students' very existence is negated by their

omission from the majoritarian narrative (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a) of what it means to be gifted, what it means to be Latina/o, and what it means to be an English learner in US schools (Valencia & Villarreal, 2011). In most schools, the culture and language that frame these students as active members of their communities act to characterize them in deficit (R. McDermott & Varene, 1995). For that reason their stories constitute counternarrative – counterstories – because students so marginalized are rarely heard, and their experiences contest dominant views about their chances at educational success (Muñoz & Maldonado, 2011).

The Westcreek bilingual elementary schools these nine participants in this dissertation study attended were not typical of bilingual elementary schools in much of Texas. In these schools, according to the participants, their Mexican and Spanish bilingual identities were affirmed, and more importantly, were not positioned as an impediment to their academic achievement. The practices of the elementary gifted education program in Westcreek ISD created, if you will, a figured world of its own inside the larger figured world of bilingual education in Texas. In this figured world, the participants' linguistic identity was refigured such that it included smartness (Hatt, 2012). At the time of their identification, their classrooms were not the bilingual "ghettoes" (Valdés, 2001) decried in some of the research literature. Despite the "at-risk" label and the presumption of academic deficit, the Westcreek elementary schools these students attended mitigated the effects of an "official" system that was not designed to meet their academic, linguistic and cultural needs. Elementary education in Westcreek provided these students, and other gifted ELLs in their schools, a culturally and linguistically responsive environment in which to become academically successful.

The identification of gifted, bilingual Latina/o students in Westcreek's elementary schools speaks to the effectiveness of culturally-responsive education (Ford, 2005b; Ladson-

Billings, 1995) in helping talented students reach their full potential. The evidence can be found in these participants' successes – and their failures. A study by Fránquiz and Salazar (2004) offers a framework for Chicana/Chicano high school student success predicated on a culturally-responsive pedagogy. That elementary students could be successful when their cultural, linguistic, and academic needs are properly met, yet later struggle when linguistically appropriate instruction ends, demonstrates that culturally- and linguistically-responsive programs can mitigate the institutional paradox of "at-risk" and "gifted." This finding echoes the González (2006) study, which provided evidence that low income ELLs best demonstrate their high cognitive performance when assessment measures access their unique cultural and linguistic capital.

Officially, the gifted/at-risk paradox ends when the students are considered English proficient. However, due to changes in both Bilingual/ESL and GT program services, this is precisely when conflicts between the students' academic and linguistic identities began to surface. Because bilingual education services end at fifth grade in Westcreek, once the students were in middle school they were denied the opportunity to demonstrate their academic competence in Spanish. At the same time, the middle schools they attended delivered their GT program services through their language arts/reading classes. This change in GT program services deviated significantly from the pullout services the students had in elementary school. In essence, by delivering its program services through a single advanced-content class, Westcreek's middle school GT program failed to demonstrate fidelity to its Renzulli-based, general intellectual abilities program model. Advanced content in the language arts may not adequately service gifted students who were identified based on strengths in creativity, leadership, or above average ability in content areas other than the language arts. As a result, ironically, the future

academic success of some of the students in this study became even more "at-risk" in secondary school than it was in their elementary years, even as they lost that official label. Table 6.1, which reorders the data presented in Table 3.3 to focus on the student's exit from bilingual/ESL services, provides a clue to their academic futures in middle and high school. Recall that Joaquín and Adriana reported having a particularly difficult transition to middle school because they had received instruction exclusively in Spanish until just before sixth grade. As the table shows, they were the last to exit from bilingual/ESL program services. Having satisfied all the other criteria, their exit depended on demonstrating proficiency in writing. Adriana's exit date indicates that she passed the writing portion of the annual state assessment for ELLs, the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), at the end of sixth grade; Joaquín satisfied the writing requirement in seventh grade by passing either TELPAS writing or the state-mandated TAKS Writing test all seventh graders took at that time. However, despite having passed state writing assessments in Spanish in fourth grade and English in seventh grade, Joaquín and Adriana failed to meet recommended passing standards on the writing portion of the English I End of Course test. Both attended summer school and retook the test. Neither passed the second time either, although they raised their scores enough to reach minimum, rather than unsatisfactory, performance. Is there a connection between the amount of English instruction the students received in elementary school and their secondary school success in English Language Arts?

Table 6.1: Participants' Exits from Westcreek's Bilingual Program.

Name	Gender	Grade in 2011-2012	Entered Bilingual Education	Exited from Bilingual Education	Identified for GT Program Services
Joaquín Rodríguez	Male	Freshman	Kinder	8th grade	3rd grade
Adriana García	Female	Freshman	PreK	7th grade	2nd grade
Marifer González	Female	Sophomore	PreK	6th grade	2nd grade
Mía Martínez	Female	Sophomore	Kinder	6th grade	3rd grade
Naya Ramírez	Female	Freshman	PreK	5th grade	2nd grade
Derrick Ramos	Male	Freshman	PreK	5th grade	1st grade
Edwin Solís	Male	Sophomore	Grade 3	5th grade	3rd grade
Christian Washington	Male	Freshman	Kinder	5th grade	2nd grade
Natalie Washington	Female	Senior	PreK	5th grade	2nd grade

Researchers' estimates vary for how long it takes ELLs to acquire sufficient English to perform at a level that is commensurate with that of their native English- speaking classmates. Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) estimate that it takes ELLs between four to seven years to develop academic proficiency in English. Wright (2010), citing Crawford & Krashen (2007) and Hill (2004, 2006) estimates that it can take from 5-8 years for ELLs to acquire the academic proficiency needed for grade level literacy in English. If indeed Joaquín and Adriana received instruction exclusively in Spanish until fifth grade, they were in their fifth year of English instruction when they took the English I End of Course test as freshmen. Their performance should not be compared with that of their Native English speaking peers as they are still within the expected window of development for ELLs acquiring academic English. In fact, that they passed any portion of the test speaks to their giftedness: one of the characteristics of gifted ELLs in US schools is rapid acquisition of English (Bernal & Reyna, 1994; Castellano, 1998).

Recall, however, that both Joaquín and Adriana had passed prior, grade-level assessments of English writing. Thomas and Collier (2004) note that former ELLs who have been in a

bilingual education program typically make less than one year's academic growth as compared to their native English-speaking peers. Holding all things equal – the rigor and demand of the tests across time as a large factor – this could account for these students' success on prior assessments of written English.

Unfortunately, ELL and former ELL academic success is measured in this figured world by standards that do not have their needs in mind. A CRT perspective on acquisition of English (Mitchell, 2012) reminds us that predicating student success on such measures upholds the majoritarian story that English instruction and mastery is all that matters.

What happens to the academic identity of a formerly successful student who is labeled a failure based on inappropriate assessments? Mía, Adriana, and Christian's experiences demonstrate that some students may feel inadequate and blame themselves for their failure to achieve these more "traditional" measures of school success (Rubin, 2007). One consequence is that some gifted former ELLs reject participation in the GT program. Edwin spoke of his Spanish-speaking friends who "got out of GT" because it became too hard. Adriana takes no more than one advanced academics course a year. Mía has not taken Advanced Academics since her freshman year. Their experiences reveal serious flaws in both the GT and the Bilingual/ ESL program models in the delivery of services for gifted former ELLs.

What happens to students whose language and ways of being are recognized as exemplars of giftedness when they are identified in elementary school, but who fail to realize "success" as framed by the figured world of high school? Joaquín and Marifer referenced this disconnection in their interviews. Joaquín understood that the real issue, of course, is not the students, but the mismatch between the elementary and secondary schools. These gifted students

have not only beaten the odds of identification as young bilingual students, they have beaten the odds of maintaining a gifted identity in secondary school.

Hatt (2007) points out that in most schools, dominant notions of smartness are "heavily connected to white privilege" (p. 162). This is certainly the case in Chase's STEMM, even though the students are majority Latina/o. Most of Chase's white students are enrolled in STEMM, and the percentage of white students identified as gifted – 36.0% compared with 14.8% Latina/o students identified as gifted (Westcreek Testing and Evaluation, 2012) – calls to mind the conflation of whiteness with giftedness in Staiger's (2004) study of the gifted magnet program at Roosevelt High school.

Perhaps gifted education researchers should examine program models instead of raising doubts because students identified by "alternative means" do not perform as their white, middle class peers. Changes in policy at the state level could compel districts to provide services for gifted students that focus more on needs of all students, including students of color, economically oppressed students, Ells, and former ELLs. In the following section, I focus on potential ways the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted could be strengthened toward that end.

Implications for Policy: The Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talented

Gifted education policy, like all educational policy, differs from state to state. For example, Texas is one of only 25 states in the US that both mandate and fund education for gifted-identified students in its public schools. Of that group of 25, only three states completely fund gifted education with state monies. Texas is not one of them.

On the other hand, Texas's relatively robust State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talented does require school districts to provide a number of services for gifted identified

students and offers a roadmap for student identification. Some of its provisions, for example 1.5.2C, that students be tested in languages they understand or through nonverbal means (Texas Education Agency, 2009), have the potential to mandate inclusion of gifted ELLs. Others, such as 1.6C, which guarantees all students access to assessment but not to services unless identified, do not go far enough. Because this dissertation study was conducted in Texas, I examine the Texas State Plan for the Education of the Gifted/Talent, using a CRT/LatCrit analytical perspective, as a point of departure to make recommendations for policy changes in gifted education.

The Texas State Plan provides guidance to Texas public school districts in five areas pertaining to gifted education: student assessment, program services, curriculum, professional development, and family and community involvement. What the state requires of districts is spelled out in the "In Compliance" column of the plan. Each page of the State Plan features two additional columns for levels beyond basic compliance that call to mind the way Texas rates its schools based on the student accountability program: practices beyond those "In Compliance" are called "Recommended" or "Exemplary."

The "Recommended" and "Exemplary" levels of program services are notably more inclusive of student differences. For example, provision 1.1C requires that written policies and procedures on nomination and assessment be available to all parents. The recognized level, 1.1.1R and 1.1.2R, state that such information is provided to parents in their language or through interpreters; the exemplary level (1.1.3E) of this same provision extends interpretation services to all parent conferences and meetings. If the State of Texas acknowledges that these are desirable levels of service, why not require them?

I believe that recognizing the need for more inclusive practices in gifted education services while requiring only less inclusive practices represents a form of "interest convergence" (Bell, 1992). Bell first coined this term to describe the motives behind the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board*. According to Bell, the nine justices on the court did not mandate an end to school segregation by race based on a sudden recognition that separate facilities were an unjust violation of the US Constitution. Rather, the fight for civil rights occurred at a time when the US was emerging as a world superpower in opposition to its former World War II ally, the Communist Soviet Union. Lawful segregation undermined the US image as the beacon of world democracy. The *Brown* decision, on the other hand, served to further that image. What appeared to be a victory for civil rights was, according to Bell, calculated to exploit a particular moment in history. Institutional racism, Bell posits, does not give up any of its structural power without gaining something greater in return. Recent work on the retrenchment of school segregation (see, for example, Orfield & Lee, 2004) strengthen Bell's original argument that the *Brown* decision was not meant to end racial discrimination in public schools.

Gifted education policy in the Texas State Plan that acknowledges a preference for inclusive practices while requiring compliance at levels that perpetuate the underrepresentation of students of color, economically oppressed students, and ELLs allow the State of Texas to avoid charges that its policies are discriminatory. This action demonstrates that districts are, in fact, encouraged to adopt inclusive "Recommended" and "Exemplary" practices, though there is neither incentive nor reward for them to do so. In most cases, the Texas State Plan gives on-paper lip service to equal access to gifted education services.

So, one simple fix to strengthen gifted education policy in Texas would be to make practices currently considered Recommended or Exemplary, such as 1.1.1R and 1.1.2 R and

1.1.3E above, compulsory gifted education services. For example, the compliance level of the above-mentioned 1.6C merely guarantees all students access to assessment. However, provision 1.6E, the exemplary level practice, would mandate that "the population of the total district is reflected in the population of the gifted/talented services program or has been for two (2) of the past three (3) years" (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Districts would therefore be required to identify students of color, ELLs, students receiving special education services, and other students currently underrepresented in gifted education programs in numbers that are more reflective of their distribution within a district's enrollment. This could effectively end the overrepresentation of white and students of East Asian heritage in Texas's gifted programs – or end gifted education altogether.

Other provisions in the State Plan that would that are now considered optional but would strengthen gifted education programs for all students if required include:

Student Assessment

- Replace 1.4 C ("Students in grades K-12 shall be assessed and, if identified, provided gifted/talented services (TEC §29.122 and 19 TAC §89.1(3))") with 1.4E ("Students in grades K-12 are assessed and served in all areas of giftedness included in TEC §29.121").

  The suggested change recognizes that gifted education services should be provided in areas beyond the four foundational (English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies) curricular areas.

- Make 1.5.2R ("All kindergarten students are automatically considered for gifted/talented and other advanced level services") a requirement. Universal screening removes the teacher from the role of gatekeeper in referring students for assessment and often alerts staff to gifted students who might not have been considered for referral.

Program Services

- Replace 2.1C ("Identified gifted/talented students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities and that emphasize content in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. Services are available during the school day as well as the entire school year. Parents are informed of these options (19 TAC §89.3(3))") with 2.1E ("Services for gifted/talented students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced,

and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas, arts, leadership, and creativity.").

The suggested change recognizes that gifted students should receive challenging program services in areas beyond the four foundational curricular areas. Services should be designed to allow growth in the student's area of strength.

- Replace 2.4C ("Local board policies are developed that are consistent with State Board of Education rules on credit by examination (19 TAC §74.24) and early high school graduation opportunities (TEC §56.203)") with 2.4.1R ("Flexible pacing is employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills") and 2.4.2R ("Local board policies are developed that enable students to participate in dual/concurrent enrollment, correspondence courses, distance learning opportunities, accelerated summer programs, and/or the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP)").

- Replace 3.3C ("Opportunities are provided to accelerate in areas of student strengths (19 TAC §89.3(4))") with 3.3E ("Scheduling modifications are implemented in order to meet the needs of individual students') and 3.3R ("Flexible pacing is employed, allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate to their abilities and skills.")

Flexible pacing through the use of options such as curriculum compacting are particularly important for ELLs and former ELLS, as their learning trajectory does not always parallel that of native English speakers. Compacted studies in areas they have already mastered would allow them more in-school time and support to concentrate on skills they need to strengthen. The second recommended replacement formalizes advanced study options for secondary students that extend beyond what is available in K-12 settings.

<u>Curriculum</u>

- Replace 3.1C ("An array of appropriately challenging learning experiences in each of the four (4) foundation curricular areas is provided for gifted/talented students in grades K-12, and parents are informed of the opportunities (19 TAC §89.3)") with 3.1.1R ("Opportunities are provided for students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines through guided and independent research") and 3.1E ("Curriculum options in intellectual, creative and/or artistic areas; leadership; and specific academic fields are provided for gifted/talented students").

These changes would require gifted education curriculum beyond the foundational curricular areas and guarantee gifted students interest-based independent study opportunities.

- Replace 3.2C ("A continuum of learning experiences is provided that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) (19 TAC §89.3(2))") with 3.2E ("The opportunity for students who have been served in a gifted program for one or more years to develop sophisticated products and/or performances assessed by external

evaluators who are knowledgeable in the field that is the focus of the product is available through gifted/talented curricula").

The suggested provision would require GT curriculum that prepares all gifted students to produce advanced work. In Westcreek, students who take the Independent Study Mentorship class have this opportunity – but it is not required, and GT curriculum does not necessarily lead to this end.

Because I used the Texas State Plan as a point of departure, these suggested policy changes are not comprehensive. Gifted education policy must ensure that gifted current and former ELLs have appropriate linguistic support as well. Federal Court Judge Robert W. Gettleman's recent opinion in the Illinois U-46 Board of Education discrimination case suggests that gifted ELLs are entitled to individual language support as needed within the broader gifted education program (McFadden et al. v. Board of Education for Ilinois School District U-46 2013). "Appropriate linguistic support" could be interpreted as a continuing to provide content-area instruction in students' first language. Policy in the area of bilingual and ESL education, therefore, would have to be amended so as not to make the acquisition of academic English the only goal of such programs. Mandates for dual language education would ensure that ELLs develop grade-appropriate linguistic skills in two languages, and that fully bilingual and biliterate graduates would be prepared for university-level study in both English and the other target language.

Moreover, provisions at all three levels of the Texas State Plan are phrased such that students have "opportunities" to learn. Gifted students must be entitled to gifted education services as an essential component of their school program. Standards for the four foundation curricular areas do not provide options for student achievement. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Mathematics do not offer students "opportunities" to learn to add and subtract, but

rather mandate that schools teach them to do so. Gifted education standards should be codified in a similar way.

Unfortunately, like many mandates in education policy, the Texas State Plan suffers from a lack of funding and lack of enforcement. The state is required to provide funding for gifted identified students up to 5% of a district's enrollment. Districts like Westcreek, where more than 5% of its total enrollment is identified as gifted (recall that 17.2% of Chase's students were identified as gifted during the 2011-2012 school year) must compensate for what the state does not provide with local funds. As such, gifted education is at best an underfunded mandate in Texas.

When Texas revised its evaluation processes for school districts in the early 2000s, gifted education programs were no longer included in a district's audit for compliance with state education policy. As a result, there is little incentive for districts, particularly small districts, to provide even the most basic GT services. The state must resume audits of GT programs to ensure that districts are in compliance with mandated services for its gifted-identified students.

These few suggestions of revised policy for gifted education would require research on best practices in gifted education for current and former ELLs as well as other underrepresented and underserved gifted students. Other directions for future research in this area are offered in the following section.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

These bilingual, bicultural, Mexican and Mexican American students see themselves as smart, capable and outside the norm, whether as academically intelligent, capable students, talented athletes, skilled musicians, and/or creative writers. It becomes difficult, then, to determine whether their innate abilities or their institutional initiation into the "power" club of

academic "haves" – or some combination – is at the root of their success. How much of their identification and academic success reproduces and how much reframes the institutional construct of giftedness? Does their identification and academic success fundamentally change gifted education because it refigures what is considered "gifted" and, as Hatt said, once the door is opened it cannot be unopened?[67] Given that the students experienced a culturally, linguistically and academically appropriate elementary gifted education in the Westcreek School District, there is hope that gifted education programs can become inclusive of gifted ELLs. Unfortunately, Westcreek's secondary Gifted Education program perpetuates a narrow national norm. Future investigations should consider how secondary education programs for the gifted can be changed to serve the needs of ELLs and former ELLs and build on their academic, linguistic, and cultural strengths.

Based on this study, it appears that gifted ELLs and former ELLs would benefit from secondary education programs that, like the elementary programs the participants in this study attended, recognize their needs as English learners while providing continued opportunities to excel academically and socially in Spanish. Ideally, middle and high school programs could offer content in linguistically-accommodated English that reflects the research on the actual time ELLs need to acquire proficiency in English. Other classes could offer content in Spanish to continue to build students' acquisition of academic Spanish vocabulary and advanced content. This is not to imply that these classes would require strict separation of English and Spanish, as is the case in some dual language programs. The students in this study, through their strategic code-switching and bilingual literacy practices, demonstrate that they already use both English and Spanish simultaneously to negotiate their linguistic and academic worlds. Rather, translanguaging (Bartlett & García, 2011), the purposeful use of both languages in instruction,

[67] See Hatt (2012), p. 457.

would be the preferred pedagogy as it would allow these students full access to their linguistic repertoire. The goal of such programs would be to build on the linguistic and academic strengths they develop in elementary school and to graduate fully bilingual and biliterate students.

The findings of this study also revealed that these students flourished in elementary gifted programs and high school gifted education electives that offered alternative curriculum and self-directed study. Therefore, program services for gifted students should include these classes at all levels: elementary, middle and high school. Changes in GT program service delivery in middle school left some students wondering if they were still in the program. Mía recalled that when she was in middle school, "I think I was in there in 6th grade," but that "…then…they just never said anything about it anymore like 7th and 8th." She later clarified: "In sixth grade I did. In seventh and eighth…?" As for high school, she said: "and then 9th…like…nothing." Christian also was able to recall his GT services in a different middle school but said: "…we don't really have it anymore in high school." Overall, the students do not consider the PreAP and AP classes Westcreek includes as GT program services comparable to their elementary pullout services. As Naya said, "… now it's just like - oh. I'm *just in advanced classes*" (emphasis added).

The courses should not be offered as electives but as a required program service for GT-identified students and not connected to a particular content area. In addition, students should be free to choose advanced content classes such as PreAP and AP classes– but these classes should be linguistically and academically differentiated wherever possible so that they are appropriate to the needs of gifted ELLs and former ELLs. This could be accomplished through differentiation strategies such as curriculum compacting (Boothe & Stanley, 2004), which eliminates the need to "cover" content students have already mastered, and in turn frees them to concentrate on acquiring new skills and knowledge. Such freedom of choice in selecting advanced content

courses is a feature of Westcreek high schools but is limited in middle schools, where GT students tend to be placed in advanced content Reading and Language Arts classes for delivery of GT program services, even if these are not their areas of academic strength. Delivery of program services in middle school through Reading/Language Arts did not meet the academic needs of at least some of the students in this study. Adriana reported: "…in eighth grade they mixed reading with GT. We had the same period at the same time and it really didn't work out. We would just read and read and read; we didn't do anything for GT." Joaquín said that being gifted was an asset for him in school, until the district changed the delivery of GT services to Reading/Language Arts. Because he was still acquiring English, he struggled with the advanced content. Content course selection, then, would be determined by the student's academic strengths and interests and not simply the management of a master schedule.

Finally, secondary schools would do well to model the culturally-appropriate pedagogy of the bilingual elementary schools in recognizing students' affective need to belong to an affirming community. Even as J.R. Martínez acknowledges that Westcreek's secondary schools are becoming more aware of the need for cultural competence, the students in this study identified differences that made them feel less than affirmed in their Mexican/Mexican-American culture in middle and high school. For example, secondary schools need to recognize that a significant portion of the student body, and undoubtedly a larger proportion of their families, are more proficient in Spanish than English. Signage in both languages is common in elementary schools and nearly absent at Chase and on other secondary campuses. Information on the websites and all communication sent to students' homes should be provided in both English and Spanish. While certainly there is more to creating a culturally affirming campus than

providing school-generated communication in the languages of the community, increased linguistic accessibility could be one place to start.

Another area to consider is the effect the district's implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate identification procedures has had on teachers' "implicit" definitions of giftedness. It would appear that the issue of naming and identifying what is gifted in an empirical sense – if it is indeed possible to do so – for these students in this particular figured world becomes very complex. Is giftedness being transformed (language embraced, culture celebrated and used to identity), or are hegemonic views of giftedness being reinforced by finding and selecting privilege among poor, ELL students?

Apart from the social capital the students in this study gained in elementary and middle school from being identified as gifted, they benefited from other advantages. First, these students have attended the same schools, if not lived in the same houses, throughout their public school career. At a campus where more than 20% of the students moved during one school year[68] (Texas Education Agency, 2012b), such stability places these students outside the norm. They have benefitted from having continuity in their instructional services as well as ties to their community.

Second, eight of the nine students who participated in this study live in two-parent households. Only 48% of households in this area reflect that characteristic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Living with two parents could offer several advantages. There is the potential for increased income. There are more opportunities for adult interaction. This has potential benefits for help with homework, school projects, and vocabulary development.

[68] The mobility rate is determined by the percentage of students at a given school at the end of the school year that have been there, without interruption, since the first day of school.

Such advantages deserve analysis to determine if giftedness is simply being reconfigured as relative opportunity in comparison with their peers. In other words, is the gifted construct actually becoming more inclusive in these students' school communities, or are hegemonic, implicit views of giftedness reinforced by selecting students who are more traditionally privileged relative to their peers? Further investigations with larger samples should consider and what percentages of other gifted-identified students at similar schools come from two-parent households and have the same patterns of school stability. Are these characteristics that gifted-identified students from low-income, Latina/o majority, bilingual schools have in common? If so, the question needs to be asked: are these characteristics of privilege relative to their school peers being conflated with academic talent? The literature demonstrates that in more economically diverse schools, students identified as gifted are often those from higher income families (Boothe & Stanley, 2004; Castellano, 2004; Matthews & Kirsch, 2011; *Overlooked gems: A national perspective on low-income promising learners*, 2006; Smutny, 2003). Are stability and parental involvement being used as proxy for income in the case of students from high-poverty schools?

Regrettably, questions stemming from Westcreek's RFID program at Chase are beyond the scope of this dissertation study. From a CRT/LatCrit perspective, some of the more obvious questions involve the choice of requiring the RFID only at Chase and one of its feeder campuses. Why were only low income, Latina/o majority campuses selected? Does the emphasis on attendance for purposes of state-funding, not academic achievement, position poor Black and Brown bodies as commodities? Future studies could approach the RFID requirement at Chase from a figured worlds' perspective. What is the impact of being figured as in need of constant surveillance on a student's academic and social identity? How are Latina/o students figured in

the larger community (i.e., the rest of the school district, the city, the state, the nation) given that Chase and one if its feeder campuses are the only schools positioned as having poor attendance? Does the emphasis on attendance with respect to school funding and legal consequences in the absence of its effect on academic achievement, figure Chase students as potentially criminal? An evaluation of the RFID program that does not consider these consequences would be incomplete at best.

In fact, connections can be made from findings in this study between the phenomenon of giftedness and academic identity and the RFID program. Recall that 10 of the classes featured in Chase's closed circuit TV loop for wearing the RFID were Advanced Academics classes – and one of those was the GT Leadership class that Naya and Derrick took. Cuero (2009) found that "good" students were figured as those who conformed to dominant notions of obedient behavior. Other students with successful academic achievement (as measured on the TAKS) were not positioned as "good" students if their behavior was noncompliant. Staiger (2004) noted a similar positioning of behavior with academic success in her study of the construction of giftedness at Roosevelt High School. Is there a comparable conformity associated with wearing the RFID tags at Chase? Recall that the students in this study were found to employ a conformist form of resistance capital (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) at school. As such, they were unlikely to challenge existing practices and conventions, even though they may perceive them as unfair. It may be instructive to investigate the degree to which compliance/obedience are positioned as academic success at Chase, and the effect this has on its students. What effect does the juxtaposition of compliant behavior and academic success have on the academic identities on all students at Chase?

CONCLUSION

What is the phenomenon of being bilingual, gifted, and culturally Mexicana/o? These students started as members of identifiable, marked groups– specifically, gifted and bilingual –by institutional practice in their elementary schools. The varied identities they claim beyond those they have in common speak to their own agentic influences on those institutional trajectories. I believe their presence renames, resists, and reframes the institutional construct of giftedness. These students have failed at becoming pigmented white kids who have repudiated their first language, subverted the interests of their families and communities in their quest for their own achievement, chosen to associate only with other gifted students, and see themselves as striving individuals, rather than members of larger communities. They defy the mainstream logic that individual decisions to develop self-discipline and pursue education are incompatible with the aspirational, linguistic, social, resistance, familial, and navigational capital gained from Chicana/o community cultural wealth.

This dissertation study presents a counterstory because it relies on the lived experiences of students of Color to call attention to racially uneven practices, even in Latina/o majority schools. It begins with the premise that such institutional structures as gifted education and transitional bilingual education, as practiced in the figured world of Texas public schools, can, but do not and need not always position ELLs to receive inadequate educational opportunities. The experiences of these former ELLs, at least in their elementary schools, prove that culturally, academically, and linguistically appropriate services for gifted Latina/o students is possible. I have revealed the paradox of bilingual giftedness in secondary schools that fail to recognize Spanish speakers' linguistic capital, do not provide adequate linguistic accommodation, and subordinate bilingual children's access to academic content instruction to their need to acquire

English. This study is a counterstory because it demonstrates how a school community can use the means at its disposal to act against practices such as offering "access" to GT testing and services in English only and provide academically, culturally and linguistically appropriate education for its gifted ELLs. This study is a counterstory that demonstrates that culturally appropriate pedagogy can position Mexican and Mexican-American students to be academically successful.

Finally, their success contests dominant notions about Mexican and Mexican-American families in the US. These students' use of familial capital defies the stereotype that their families don't care about education (Valdés, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). The participants disprove commonly-held notions that students in bilingual education programs fail to fully acquire English and show us how their bilingual linguistic capital at home and in the community enhances their learning in school. That all of the students have, at one time, elected advanced academic courses in secondary school gives lie to the notion that Latina/o students do not want to learn or are not academically equipped to meet the challenge of Advanced Placement course options. They stand as examples of aspirational capital as part of the majority of Latina/o teens who are not parents, in contrast to the alarmist media coverage of the sizeable but nonetheless *minority* of Latina/o high school students who are. They have used their cultural capital to negotiate rather than minimize their linguistic and cultural identities to promote their academic identities. This dissertation study stands as counterstory because it reveals how one group of gifted, former ELLs used community cultural wealth to affirm their bilingual, gifted, and culturally Mexicana/o identities in a figured world that did not position them for success.

Appendix A

Interview Protocols

First individual interview
First I want to ask you some questions about yourself, and then I'll ask some questions about school.

1. How did you become bilingual?

2. When you were little, what language did you speak most at home? What language do you speak most at home now? With whom do you speak Spanish most at home (or outside of school)? Why? With whom do you speak English most at home? Why?

3. Were you in the bilingual program/bilingual classes when you were in elementary school? What grades? (Offer grades PreK, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

4. What do you remember most about being in your bilingual classes? Tell me about some things you remember particularly well from the time you were in your bilingual classes.

5. Tell me about some things you remember particularly well from the time you started taking all-English classes.

6. Do you ever speak Spanish at school nowadays? Under what circumstances?

7. Can you describe a time when being bilingual helped you in school?
Can you describe a time when being bilingual worked against you in school?

8. Is it important to you to speak Spanish and English? Why or why not?

9. How did you get into the GT program? When/what grade did you start being in the GT program? Do you remember anything about the testing? Did you take the test in English or in Spanish?

10. Tell me something you remember about first being in the GT program.

11. Can you describe a time when being gifted helped you in school?
Can you describe a time when being gifted worked against you in school?

12. What does being gifted mean to you? What do you consider to be your strengths?

13. How does your family feel about your being in the GT program? What are your family's expectations of your academic future?

14. Do you have a myspace/Facebook page? What languages do you use on your pages? What languages do your friends use?

Second individual Interview

1. Is there anything you thought about that you want to tell me about since the first time we talked? Any questions you have?

2. In our first interview you said _____were your most important reasons for speaking Spanish. Now that you have had time to reflect on what we talked about and what you said, is there anything you'd like to change about your answer?

3. Did you think about how language is used on your myspace/Facebook pages?

4. How important is bilingualism to you?

5. How important is your culture to you?

6. Sometimes you might be asked to bubble in your ethnicity on an application or a test. What do you bubble in? Would you use the same word to describe yourself and want other people to use to describe you? What does it mean to you?

7. What is a typical school day like for you?

8. What kinds of activities do you participate in at school? Outside of school?

9. Can you describe a time when you felt that your history and culture was well-represented at school? Outside of school?

10. What opportunities are there for you to use Spanish in class?

11. Tell me about your friends. How are you different or like them?

12. Are there things (events) happening in the world that you are concerned about or that worry you? Did you participate in any way in the walkouts on immigration reform in 2006 or the demonstrations against SB 1070 (the Arizona immigration law) this past summer? Why or why not?

Focus group

After introductions: Do any of you know one another? How well? How do you know one another - in what contexts?

1. What feelings do you have about being in the GT program? What do your friends think about your being in the GT program? Do you feel being gifted affects your popularity at school with other kids? What about with teachers and administrators?

2. Have you ever tried to hide your giftedness or intelligence or tried to appear less intelligent than you are? What were the circumstances?

3. What academic expectations do you think teachers in your school have for students at your school? How are your assets as a Latina or Latino students taken into account – or not – in their expectations? How are your assets as a GT student taken into account (or not

4. When have you felt that your language and culture were valued at school?

5. What opportunities are there to speak Spanish at school? outside of school?

6. What consejos/advice would you give to a parent considering whether his/her child should be in the GT program?

7. What consejos/advice would you give to a Latina/o GT student coming to your school?

8. What consejos/advice would you give to an elementary student in a bilingual classroom who is starting out in the GT program?

Appendix B: Comparison of Marifer's Answer to Question 2.2 to other Participants.

<Internals\Interviews\ Marifer Interview #2> - § 1 reference coded [3.70% Coverage] Reference 1 - 3.70% Coverage	<Internals\Interviews\ Derrick Interview #2> - § 1 reference coded [5.31% Coverage] Reference 1 - 5.31% Coverage	<Internals\Interviews\ Joaquín Interview #2 edited> - § 1 reference coded [7.46% Coverage] Reference 1 - 7.46% Coverage	<Internals\Interviews\ Mía Interview #2> - § 1 reference coded [4.44% Coverage] Reference 1 - 4.44% Coverage	<Internals\Interviews\ NayaInterview Continued> - § 1 reference coded [0.87% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage	<Internals\Interviews\ Natalie Interview #1> - § 1 reference coded [2.69% Coverage] Reference 1 - 2.69% Coverage
Um, I do believe that the most important reason is my family, but I also believe that it will give me more opportunities? My career, maybe...or...I may get a better job just because I'm bilingual. I do want to go to college and maybe law school or just try to stick to like something else at a university, but I'm still not sure I wanna do law school. I wanna do either human development or human behavior. I would like to study that. I think I'll maybe buy a saxophone when I'm older? BUT I'm not gonna be in any group or anything	I said you get paid more. Jobs. How important is it to be bilingual, to you? Apparently it's pretty important because a lot of people in the United States speak Spanish and English and not most – well, most only speak one, and not both.	Well we talked about your reasons for speaking Spanish in our first interview, and you said your most important reasons for speaking Spanish were for your family. Is that still true, or do you have any other reasons? It's still true, but a few other reasons I can think of are like it'll, it'll help me, being bilingual. Makes it - ah, I can communicate better with more people, a wider variety. And it'll give me an edge on someone who can't speak two languages. I don't remember - do you have a Facebook	No, there's times that I wish they would understand English or like, would talk English, just - jokes, I'm like, "No, it's not funny in Spanish" like, "No, I can't tell you" but like, no, other than that, I think that what bugs me the most is that I can't translate? Like, if they, like "Read this letter for me!", I can't translate it all. Like, I understand it? But once it comes to telling them, I'm just like...oh, I can't explain this; I have to go to Google translate. Like I think that my Spanish got worse over the years of just being around	It's the one, the only way I can communicate with my grandma, and I'm real close to her, so...	Number 1, my family, 'cause half of them don't understand what I'm saying if I talk English. Ummm...s-second, at work, like it's ...it's hard when, when people who don't know how to speak English go in there, and we have cashiers that don't know how to talk Spanish. It's like...°it's my turn to go help them.° Ummm...I guess that's..oh, and at church. 'Cause like the, like right now we're helping out the little kids at VBS and some of them don't know...they either don't know English or they don't know Spanish so it's like I'm

I just wanna practice.		account. Yeah, I don't really - You don't really use it that much? No, it was made by a friend. So how important - you told me a little but about why you think bilingualism is important, but how important is it to you? Do you think you'll speak Spanish to your kids...? I think I will speak Spanish to my kids, because I think it's important for them to get a wider understanding of ...I don't want them to be contained, to just know one language. I w ant to make sure that they know as much as I can show them. Where do you think that comes from? How do you have that feeling? I think it's because my parents are...they're really good parents, you might argue but, I think they've raised me pretty well.	like...yeah, I don't know, so...yes, it bothers me. I'm gonna like continue. Like my mom, she's like "You're reading your Spanish so ugly, already," 'cause there's words that - like, I make up words that are not words, thinking that they're in Spanish. I never thought it was that bad, until I went to Mexico and I was listening to everybody - 'cause we took a while to go back - and whenever I first went back everybody was talking so fast, and they would tell me something and I would just be like, trying to process everything in my head, 'cause my parents don't talk <u>that</u> fast. But my aunts, and my grandma, I'm like - they're just FAST speakers, and I don't know. I would say like, I think my dog was constipated		there to help them. (Church: Centro Cristiano Internacional)

			for the longest time, like she was so scared of the road the whole week, and she like °wouldn't do anything°. So, in Spanish, constipated is estriñida, and I would say "constipiada" hhh! I would just put an "a" at the end, yeah, thinking that that was a word, and they're just looking at me and like, they called my mom "Sarita - what is she saying?" I was like, "okay, never mind!" They don't use "y'all" anywhere else?		

Appendix C: Power Point slide from Mía's English III lesson.

(Westcreek Independent School District, 2013)

December 11

English III Daily Agenda

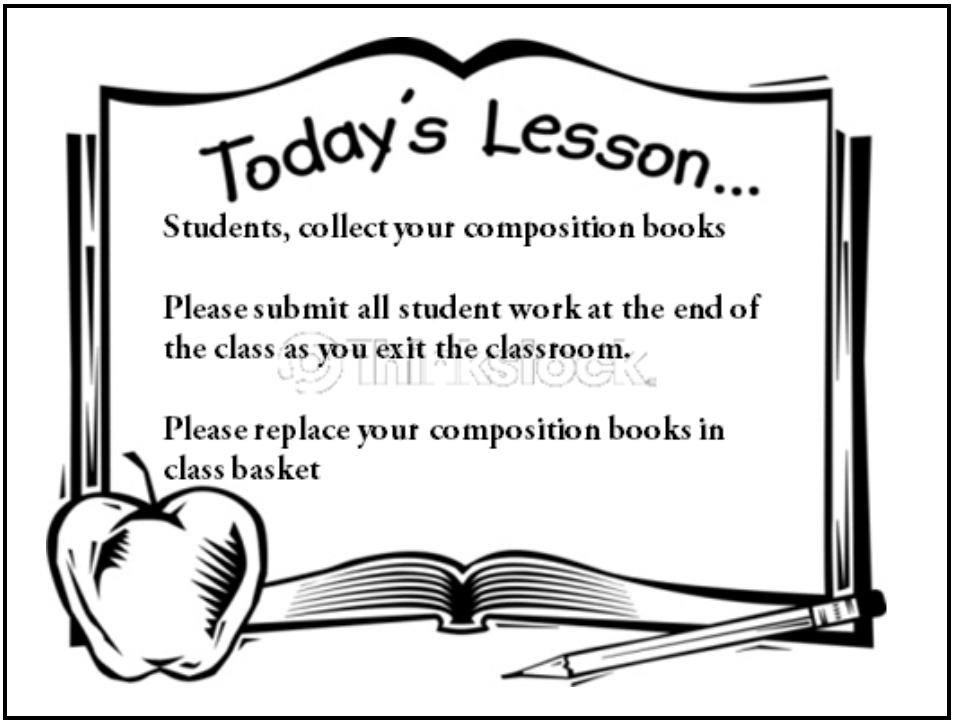
- ***The student will:-ALWAYS*** bring your pencil to class
- Students will begin analyzing an Early American Author of their choice
- The students will also select the work by that author they which to analyze
- Day 1 Requires the student Identify Literary Elements

Stapled to the vocabulary words for their selection

Must include textual evidence, page number and line number

Appendix D: Assignment from Mía's English III.

(Westcreek Independent School District, 2013)



Appendix E: Assignment from Mía's English III (includes typical homework assignment)

(Westcreek Independent School District, 2013)

Appendix F: Algebra II PreAP Assignment

(Westcreek Independent School District, 2013)

ALGEBRA 2 **NAME:** _____

COLLECTING DATA TO MODEL FUNCTIONS

M&M Activity

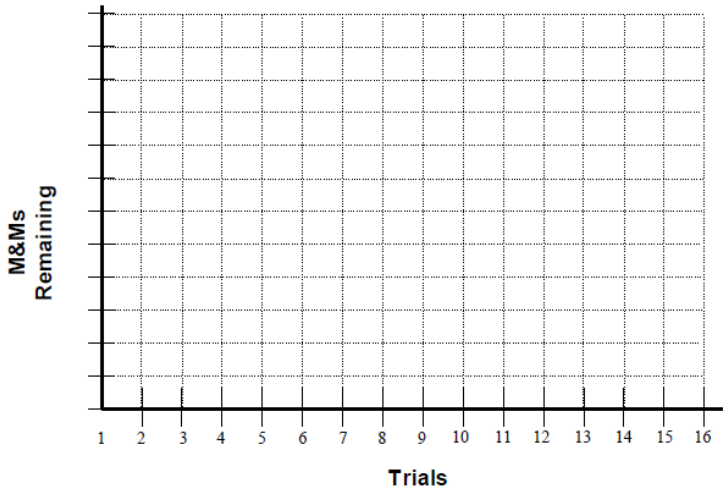
Materials Needed: 50-100 M&Ms, 1 paper cup, 1 paper plate or paper towel.

TEK: 2A.1B The student is expected to collect and organize data, make and interpret scatterplots, fit the graph of a function to the data, interpret the results, and proceed to model, predict, and make decisions and critical judgments.

Procedures:

1. Look at all M&Ms and remove any that do not have "MM" on one side.
2. Count the number of M&Ms you have. Record this in table below as trial 1.
3. Place the M&Ms in a cup.
4. Shake the cup, and empty contents onto the paper plate.
5. Remove all M&Ms that have landed "MM" side up. Eat them!
6. Record the number of M&Ms remaining on the table as trial 2.
7. Return the M&Ms to the cup and repeat steps 4-6 as trials 3, 4, etc. until no M&Ms remain.
8. Disregard the trial with "0" M&Ms.

Trial	M&Ms Remaining
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	



1. Determine a reasonable domain and range that represents this situation.

   Reasonable domain:_____ Reasonable Range:_____

2. Which parent functions models the data you have collected? Explain your reasoning.

3. Use the STAT feature on your calculator to determine an equation that models your data.

4. For the data you collected switch the independent and dependent variables and make a new graph. Describe the relationship between the original graph and this new graph?

5. Which parent function appears to model this new graph?

Appendix G: College Comparison Chart from GT Independent Study

College Comparison Chart

College Search		
	www.collegeboard.org http://www.collegeadmissionspartners.com/ www.finaid.org http://www.princetonreview.com/	Select College Board Online. Type the name of the college in the quick-search box, select the correct college from the list given; you will see the official site of the school listed and summary information about the college.

Find information about 3 colleges / universities that you are interested in attending. Enter the name of each college / university and the main website address of the school. Answer all the questions about the college / university.

The colleges/ universities used for your comparison must include the following:

- 1 out of state college / university
- 1 in state college / university
- 1 public college/university
- 1 private college/university

Name of College	1.	2.	3.
Type (public, private, technical)			
Official School Website			
Location of School			
Number of Students			
Entrance Requirements, High School Grades, Ranking			
Entrance Requirements (SAT, ACT)	SAT Verbal_____ SAT Math_____ ACT Composite_____	SAT Verbal_____ SAT Math_____ ACT Composite_____	SAT Verbal_____ SAT Math_____ ACT Composite_____

Type of Application	___Common Application ___Texas Common Application ___Other (College's own) Supplemental pages to the Common Application? Yes___ No___	___Common Application ___Texas Common Application ___Other (College's own) Supplemental pages to the Common Application? Yes___ No___	___Common Application ___Texas Common Application ___Other (College's own) Supplemental pages to the Common Application? Yes___ No___
Deadline for Applying- Early Decision and Regular Decision			
Is there an essay topic on the application? If so, what is the topic?			
Cost Per Semester or Year, specify which.			
Total Cost for 1 year			
Total Cost for 4 years			
Total Undergraduate Enrollment			
Faculty/Student Ratio or Class Size			
Amount of Financial Aid available			
Top Majors			
What do you want to major in?			
What kinds of classes would be required for this major?			
Fraternities/Sororities?			

Internships/Study Abroad Programs			
Other Important Info			

Financial Aid	How are you going to pay for college? There are lots of scholarships and financial aid available. Check out the following three sites and answer these items:
http://www.fastweb.com	What is wrapped around the exclamation mark at the end of FastWeb?
http://www.gocollege.com	What is being awarded for the GoCollege Lucky Scholarship winners? How can you win this?
http://www.CollegeForTexans.com	College for Texans.com is a project of?

Ethnicity
Some scholarships offered are awarded based on ethnicity. To find out what might be available, do the following:
Go to Google Click on Advanced Search In the search box type scholarships for _____ (fill in your ethic background or unique situation) Check out some of the sites that come up. There are scholarships offered for people with red hair. Don't be afraid to search something unique about yourself. Some scholarships are based on GPA and some are even based on your interests.

Appendix H: Syllabus, AP Spanish IV

Spanish 4 and 4 Pre-AP

Contact Information

Teacher: M_____ E_____ Room Number_____

Conference: 1st Period (8:45-9:40) Phone:_____
E-mail: _____

Materials needed:

Writing tools: pencils and pens (blue and black ink only) Notebook paper
Pocket folder
Spanish dictionary (recommended for home use) Textbook: class set

Grading Policy

50% Daily grades (quizzes, homework, listening and writing activities) includes work done in Language Lab
50% Major grades (exams, projects, speaking, listening, reading, writing activities) includes work done in Language Lab

Late work must be turned in within 3 days or will no longer be accepted.

Rules

All students will abide by the rules in the _____ student handbook.
Electric devices such as (phones, IPODS, MP3 players are not allowed in class. Student will be asked to put them away or have them picked and sent to the VPO.

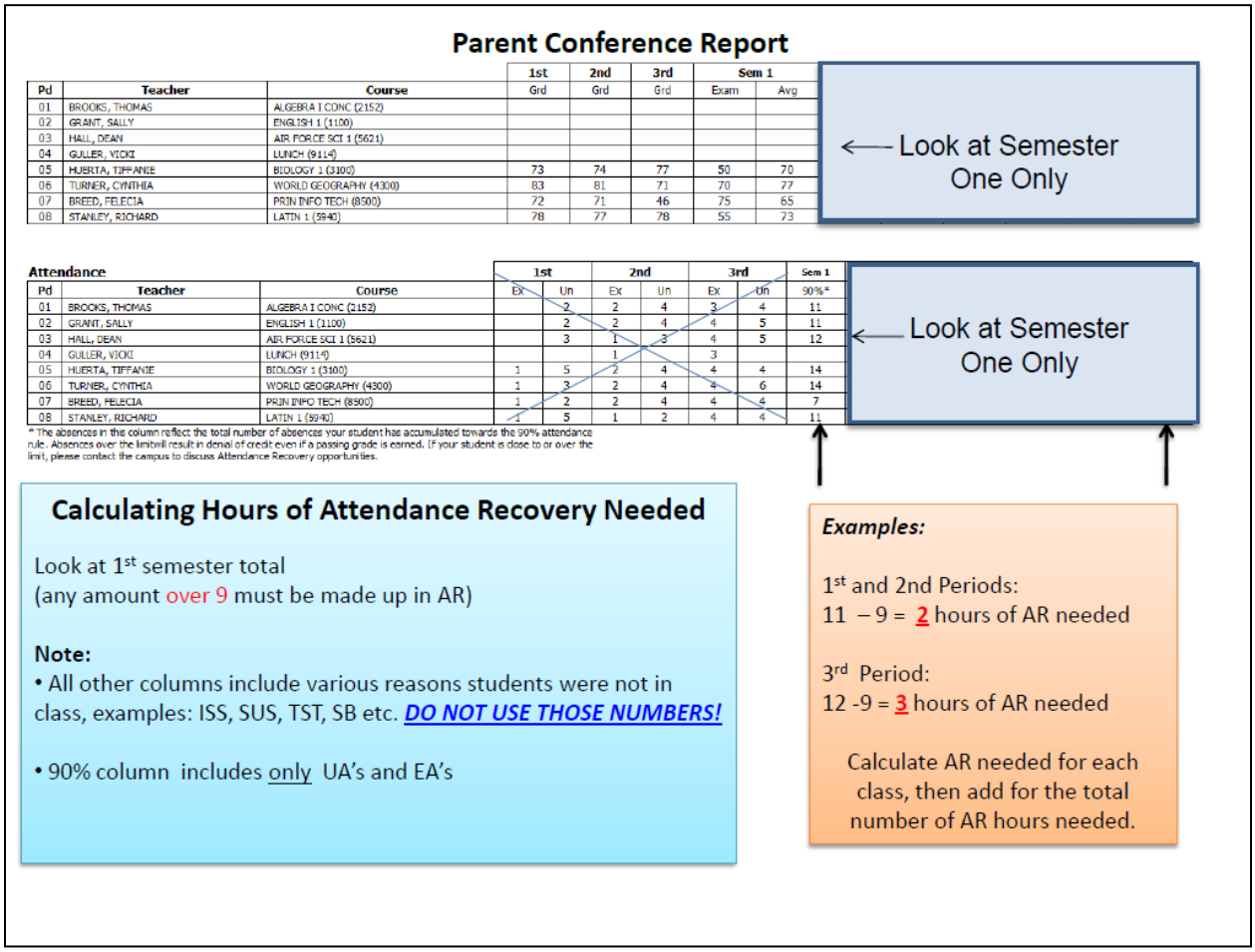
AP students

The purpose of the course is to prepare students to take the Advance Placement Test from College Board. Students at this level will be challenged by various enrichment activities. They will be required to read selections from various Hispanic authors and become familiar with the culture, and history of the Spanish speaking countries covered during this school year.

To access the ____ "s" files.

1. **Go to _____(web site)**
2. **On the right hand side beneath the scrolling marquis click on the "s" files.**
3. **Enter your user name and password**
4. **Then go to the left side column and scroll down to S (____-s Files) click on this link.**
5. **It will open a link to the Templates and Turnin folders**
6. **Choose Templates (click on Templates)**
7. **Scroll down to INTERNATIONAL _LANGUAGES_TEMPLATE (clik on it).**
8. **Scroll down and click on the folder named E_____**
9. **You fill find several folders click on the appropriate folder for your level.**

Appendix I: Parent Conference Report



Parent Conference Report

Pd	Teacher	Course	1st Grd	2nd Grd	3rd Grd	Sem 1 Exam	Sem 1 Avg
01	BROOKS, THOMAS	ALGEBRA I CONC (2152)					
02	GRANT, SALLY	ENGLISH 1 (1100)					
03	HALL, DEAN	AIR FORCE SCI 1 (5621)					
04	GULLER, VICKI	LUNCH (9114)					
05	HUERTA, TIFFANIE	BIOLOGY 1 (3100)	73	74	77	50	70
06	TURNER, CYNTHIA	WORLD GEOGRAPHY (4300)	83	81	71	70	77
07	BREED, FELECIA	PRIN INFO TECH (8500)	72	71	46	75	65
08	STANLEY, RICHARD	LATIN 1 (5940)	78	77	78	55	73

← Look at Semester One Only

Attendance

Pd	Teacher	Course	1st Ex	1st Un	2nd Ex	2nd Un	3rd Ex	3rd Un	Sem 1 90%*
01	BROOKS, THOMAS	ALGEBRA I CONC (2152)		2	2	4	3	4	11
02	GRANT, SALLY	ENGLISH 1 (1100)		2	2	4	4	5	11
03	HALL, DEAN	AIR FORCE SCI 1 (5621)		3	1	3	4	5	12
04	GULLER, VICKI	LUNCH (9114)			1		3		
05	HUERTA, TIFFANIE	BIOLOGY 1 (3100)	1	5	2	4	4	4	14
06	TURNER, CYNTHIA	WORLD GEOGRAPHY (4300)	1	3	2	4	4	6	14
07	BREED, FELECIA	PRIN INFO TECH (8500)	1	2	2	4	4	4	7
08	STANLEY, RICHARD	LATIN 1 (5940)	1	5	1	2	4	4	11

* The absences in this column reflect the total number of absences your student has accumulated towards the 90% attendance rule. Absences over the limitwill result in denial of credit even if a passing grade is earned. If your student is close to or over the limit, please contact the campus to discuss Attendance Recovery opportunities.

← Look at Semester One Only

Calculating Hours of Attendance Recovery Needed

Look at 1st semester total
(any amount over 9 must be made up in AR)

Note:

- All other columns include various reasons students were not in class, examples: ISS, SUS, TST, SB etc. ***DO NOT USE THOSE NUMBERS!***
- 90% column includes only UA's and EA's

Examples:

1st and 2nd Periods:
11 – 9 = 2 hours of AR needed

3rd Period:
12 -9 = 3 hours of AR needed

Calculate AR needed for each class, then add for the total number of AR hours needed.

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